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BRADLEYS

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POCKET NOVELS



The Lone Indian.^{no. 150}



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THE LONE INDIAN;

OR,

THE RENEGADE'S PRISONER.

A TALE OF THE LAKE TRAIL.

BY CAPT. CHAS. HOWARD,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING POCKET NOVELS:

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THE LONE INDIAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE HUNTED WOLF.

THE last rays of a sun, which was sinking behind a long bank of lead-colored clouds, fell upon two men walking in a Canadian forest.

That one was a native of this country, and the other of Germany, could have been seen at a glance.

The American, whom we will first describe, could not have passed his twenty-fourth year. He was a few inches above the medium height, well built, and possessed a remarkably intelligent face. His eyes were black and penetrating, and the mass of raven hair that graced his well-shaped head scarcely touched his collar. The only hair visible upon his face formed a "goatee," which partially hid his chin.

He was clad in a tight-fitting buck-skin hunting-frock, which open in the front, displayed the bosom of a gray home-made shirt. His leggings were also of tanned buck-skin, and his feet, looking wondrously feminine, were incased in a pair of serviceable moccasins. The protection for his head consisted of a cap, which had once covered the head of the panther. He carried a long-barreled rifle, and a knife was thrust into his leathern belt.

As I have said, the hunter's companion was a native of Germany. He stood about five feet in his moccasins, and was, perhaps, eight years the other's senior. His eyes were large, and rolled ever restlessly within their prison. His hair was sandy, and his face, which was extremely broad, was covered with a three-weeks' beard of the same color.

He was dressed like the American; but his clothes did not fit him so neatly. His weight, which is no small item, was two hundred and thirty, avoirdupois.

He was armed with one of those ancient, and, at a short distance, terribly destructive weapons, the blunderbuss. The barrel was always kept bright by polishing, and the stock was ornamented with silver. Among the designs, which were not English, was the name of its owner—Gottlieb Von Klopt.

The movements of the twain denoted that they were somewhat weary; and the manner in which the German continually shifted the heavy gun from shoulder to shoulder, told that he would willingly have dispensed with it for awhile.

He glanced at his companion, mutely imploring him to pause.

But the hunter led on among the trees.

"It's gettin' dark, Morg," said the Dutchman, at last, in his "broken English."

"So it is," responded the young man, glancing toward the clouds, which now concealed the sun.

The Teuton was evidently displeased with this answer, which brought no pause, for he relapsed into silence.

A few steps further on the hunter suddenly paused.

"Hist, Gottlieb!"

He raised his finger at his companion, and leaned forward to catch a repetition of the sound he had but indistinctly heard.

But, nothing reached his strained ears in the gloaming, save the dreary, monotonous drip, drip of melting snow from the limbs.

"Vat it vas you hear, Morg, eh?"

"I thought it was a human groan; but I guess my ears deceived me, for I hear no repetition. Here is as good a spot as we will find to pass the night, and let us build a fire at once. The little stream we crossed a few minutes since will furnish us drink, and to-morrow we may bathe in Lake Huron. Will you get some wood? I will select a camping-spot."

The Dutchman did not move; his eyes were riveted upon a coppice that covered a small mound a short distance from them.

"What do you see, Gottlieb?"

"Somedings in dat brushwood," he answered, pointing

excitedly toward the coppice. "I see 'im move, one—two—t'ree times. Dere he ish now. See 'im, Morg?"

"No; where?"

"Dere—vere dem bushes ish a leetle parted. Dunder an' blitzen, he's a bear!"

Gottlieb unslung his short gun and brought it to his shoulder.

"Step pack, Morg!" he cried, as he directed the mortar-like muzzle of the ancient weapon at the bushes, and closed his eyes. "She's got a pig load in, an' she vill kick like der tuyfel."

Instead of obeying the would-be slayer of the monarch of the Canadian forests, Morgan Darrell stepped forward and grasped the blunderbuss.

"Gottlieb," he cried, "you must be crazy. Would you fire, and bring down upon us a hundred Wyandots?"

The Dutchman's courage vanished instanter, and his great hazel eyes seemed ready and eager to dart from their sockets. His corpulent form quivered like the aspen's leaf, and his whole aspect was truly diverting.

"Der tuyfel!" was all that the honest fellow ejaculated, as he lowered the gun.

"We are, indeed, on dangerous ground," continued Morgan. "The great Indian village is not far distant. Indeed, it is so near that the report of your gun would reach it. Therefore, Gottlieb, we must be cautious, or—well, or burn."

"I vill pe cautious," gasped Gottlieb. "I wouldn't be roasted py der Inguns fur one—two—t'ree hundred dollars."

"Then stand here while I ascertain what is in the brush," said the hunter, quietly drawing a hunting-knife, and stepping forward.

"Vat!" cried the Teuton, trying to put on an indignant air, which attempt, owing to his state of fear, was a ridiculous failure. "Vat! does ye t'ink dat Gottlieb Von Klopt, who fit mit King William's dragoons on de panks of der Rhine, vill stand py an' see his friend march into danger? No! Gottlieb vas brave *then*; he is brave *now*!"

"Come, then," Morgan said, smiling at the still trembling Dutchman's braggadocio. "If there be a bear in the brush, we must kill or frighten him away without firing a shot."

Gottlieb clubbed his blunderbuss, and in silence, they advanced upon the mound.

Their moccasined footfalls upon the snow gave forth no sound, and without adventure they reached the base of the elevation, when the hunter motioned to his friend to pause.

Shadows, the precursors of night, were marshaling their dusky forces throughout the forest, and prevented the couple from looking far into the coppice. Therefore they had to content themselves with listening.

Presently a groan assailed the listeners' ears, and Gottlieb, with terror depicted upon each lineament of his face, started back.

"Some human being is suffering," said Morgan, parting the bushes.

The Dutchman clutched his arm.

"Goin' in dere?"

"Yes; why should I not?"

"It is der tuyfel."

"I care not if it is," replied the hunter, firmly. "I am going to enter."

With the last word he forced his body through the spontaneous undergrowth, and Gottlieb, suddenly becoming bold, followed his example.

But several minutes were occupied in penetrating the coppice, in the center of which they came upon a strange sight.

Upon the brushwood, which had yielded to human hands, was an Indian. He lay upon his back, and his head was pillow'd on a stone. His tall form was emaciated, and his attenuated features told the hunters that he was perishing for the want of food.

A ray of light crossed his visage when he beheld the two whites, who, with pitying eyes, regarded him. Even Gottlieb, who now for the first time stood near the "terrible red-man," forgot to flee.

After gazing in silence, for a short time, upon the starving savage, Morgan knelt down and lightly placed his hand upon the dusky brow.

It was quite feverish; and the pulse was beating with a rapidity that astonished him.

"The Indian is sick," he said aloud, addressing the Dutch-

man, whose trembling fingers were playing pit-a-pat upon the red-man's forehead.

Suddenly the sufferer's lips parted, and, to the young hunter's astonishment, he spoke English !

"The pale-face travels the trail of truth," he said, in a voice made hoarse by the inclement weather of a Canadian winter. "The Evil Spirit has laid his hands upon Weptonomah, and fiery arrows shoot along his bones. Now they pierce his knees and pin him to the ground, and now they shoot through his arms that he can procure no food. Okki has deserted him, and, like the starving wolf, he must die."

"Chief, you shall not perish," said Darrell, feelingly. "We will give you food and nurse you until the fiery arrows—the rheumatism—have left you. Can you walk now?"

"If the hunter lends Weptonomah his hands, and if the man with the big gun lets him lean upon him, he can walk."

"Help him up, Morg. I'll let der sick Ingun use me for a cane," said Gottlieb, who greatly desired an ally in the person of the chief.

The Indian looked gratefully upon the Teuton, and Morgan assisted him to gain his feet.

He would have immediately fallen had the hunter not supported him, and slowly, and with great difficulty, they left the coppice, and paused beneath a snow-burdened tree.

"We will pass the night here, Gottlieb," said Morgan. "Gather some wood. I will remain with the chief."

The Dutchman disappeared among the trees, and the young hunter addressed the Indian.

"Chief, how came you in the spot and condition we found you ?" he asked.

The dark eyes of the Indian flashed, as the hunter spoke.

"Weptonomah is the hunted and hated of his people," he cried. "He is like the man of whom the good pale-face spake when Weptonomah journeyed to his great fort—his arrow is against every red-man and every red-man's arrow against him. Once," and he tried unaided to gain his feet, "once Weptonomah was the Red Wolf of his mighty brethren ; but now," another futile effort to rise, "now, he is the Hunted Wolf—the Hunted Wolf of the Wyandots."

Pity was blended with the hunter's admiration, for he noted

the terrible pain that forced Weptonomah back whenever he attempted to rise.

"Yes," the pain-racked Indian continued, after a minute's pause, "yes, Weptonomah is a hunted wolf. He struck Lingaro, the great medicine of his people; and for the blow he was made a hunted wolf. Lingaro sacrificed Weptonomah's panther, and roused his angry passions. Weptonomah was revenged when he saw his white-haired insulter upon the ground; but he was borne to the great council-house. They dared not kill Weptonomah, for he is the son of Wapurmah. Therefore, they banished him, and sent the swiftest Wyandots to every tribe, saying: 'Weptonomah is an outlaw; kill him when you meet him.'

"Then came Weptonomah hither, and the Evil Spirit pierced him with arrows; and the Hunted Wolf laid down to die. But the pale-faces came, and Weptonomah shall live—to become the Indians' scourge and the hunter's friend. Weptonomah longs for another day to come that he may point out to the pale-face hunter the weed that will turn aside the arrows of Watchemenetoc, and make him strong as the great oak. The Hunted Wolf is on the path of vengeance, and his fangs will spare none."

By this time Gottlieb had built a fire, and at once proceeded to toast a piece of venison. When done it was handed to the chief, who, with it, appeased his craving, gnawing appetite.

"What brought the pale-faces here?" he suddenly inquired.

"We are searching for one who is lost," replied Darrell. "I will tell you the story, chief, and perhaps you can place us on the right trail."

"Let the hunter speak. Weptonomah is not hungry now, and his ears are open."

The Indian assumed a sitting posture near the fire, upon which the Dutchman threw moss fuel, and Morgan began, at once, his narrative, which we reserve for our second chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE HUNTER'S QUEST.

"CHIEF," began Morgan Darrell, "we came from the city on the neck of land near the long island. It is called by my people New York. There I was born, and there have I lived for many moons. My parents have gone to heaven, and to-night are looking down upon me, and listening to the story of the great work of my life.

"In the great city lived one of my people named Winthrop Winters. He had a daughter, who was my baby playmate. She was with me until she had reached her twelfth year, when, one dark night, when the storm kept the people within their houses, her sleeping-room was entered, and she was borne away.

"Far and wide every one searched for the lost child; but she was never found. The bad man who carried her off put his name on a piece of paper and left it where Isora had lain. He came from that country whose king sends men to the red-man with a cross, and who has many of his agents and people among the red-men of the Lakes."

"The French," muttered Weptonomah.

"Yes, he was a Frenchman. His name was Louis La Gorrœux. Will Weptonomah forget it?"

"No," said the chief, in his indifferent pronunciation of the English language. "Has he departed to the home of Watchemenetoc?"

"It is supposed that he still lives, for a report says that he has been at Niagara and boasts that he has the girl."

"Then his scalp shall hang at Weptonomah's belt!" and the Wyandot significantly touched the handle of his knife.

"The cause for the bad man's wicked actions, was a fancied wrong and insult, from Winthrop Winters. The man of France had struck one of my people in the shadows, and by them was caught and severely beaten. He thought that Winters led the party, and for revenge he stole his fair-haired

child—a maiden as beautiful as the morning. That was three summers ago.

“When Isora was taken by the bad man I had begun to love her, chief, and I swore by the white man’s Great Spirit that I would recover her and restore her to her father whose hair is as white as the snow-flakes. Many moons I have passed among the trees, reading the book of stars, and the signs of the trail. I can shoot as few can, chief, and I can track the serpent through the great wood. I have trailed the deer and fought the bear unaided. And, at last, I am prepared to undertake to rescue the daughter of the pale-face. Ten moons ago I left the city near the long island, and at my side walked the man with the big gun. Among the trees for moons we have journeyed, fighting the wild-cat, panther and bear. We have passed near the wigwams of the Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas, who live on the shores of the great water Ontario. She was not with them.

“We crossed the Noisy River near the great falls of Niagara. We heard that among the Wyandots lived a girl of my color, and hither we came to the hunting-grounds of your people. Now Weptonomah has listened to the white hunter’s story. Does the pale-faced maiden, with blue eyes and golden hair, dwell with his people? Speak, chief.”

Darrell looked anxiously into the Wyandot’s face.

On the other side of the fire lay Gottlieb Von Klopt, doubled up into a curious heap, and fast asleep.

For some moments Weptonomah gazed into the fire, as though he were reading something on the brands; and when he spoke, his voice told that he had been thinking deeply.

“He who told the white hunters, be he Indian or pale-face, that the White Lily dwells with Weptonomah’s accursed people, has a tongue as forked as the trees of the forests. It never travels the trail of truth; but licks the bark of the lodge of the Evil Spirit. No; nor is there any pale-face maiden at all with the Hurons; but there is a young white maiden I know within the lodges of the Chippewas, who was given to them by a Frenchman.”

“But, where dwell the Chippewas, chief?” eagerly asked the hunter, catching at the hope thrown at him by Weptonomah’s words, as a drowning man catches at broken straws.

"On the coldest shore of the water of beautiful rocks," replied the chief, pointing with slightly elevated finger toward the north-west.

By elevating his finger he meant that the spot was far distant.

The hunter could not restrain a sigh when Weptonomah uttered the Indian name of Superior, for he felt that it was entirely beyond his reach. He was ignorant of the trail that led to it, and he knew that, without a good guide, he could never reach the homes of the warlike Chippewas.

"The Chippewas dwell upon the northern shore of the great lake?"

"Yes," laconically replied the Indian.

"Does Weptonomah know the trail?"

"He does."

The question that mechanically welled to Morgan's lips, he forced back. He could not ask the Wyandot to guide him to the great northern lake, and place himself within the power of his greatest enemies. He dared not ask the noble quarry to place himself between the arrows of the hunters, for one who, to him, was nothing.

Again there was silence between white and red, and, filled with perplexing thoughts, the hunter's head dropped heavily upon his breast. With a pitying look the chief regarded him until, stretching out his hand, he gently touched the buck-skin sleeve.

Morgan looked up and tried to fathom the thoughts of the Wyandot. But he could not, for his features were a poor index to the contents of his breast.

"The white hunter is afraid to speak," said Weptonomah. "He is not brave enough to ask Weptonomah to guide him to the homes of the Chippewas. But he needs not to ask. The Hunted Wolf of the Wyandots will not only guide the pale-faces to the lodges of the Chippewas, but he will not turn back until the White Lily is free. The Chippewas would kill him; and he wants to kill them. White hunter, Weptonomah is your brother; but to the red men he is a wolf."

The young man grasped the hands of the outlaw, and thanked him with looks of gratitude. His grateful heart refused him speech, and the silent grip pleased the new ally more than words could have done.

"When the sun has risen and set, and risen again, Weptonomah will step upon the trail that leads to the lodges of the Chippewas. He will cross the Short River (St Clair), and tread the Woods of the Tall Trees (the pine woods of Michigan). Then he will travel toward the Manitou's Fires (Northern Lights), and cross the Great Turtle Place (Straits of Mackinaw). Then Weptonomah will cross the water that connects the Lake of the Beautiful Rocks and the Lake of the Hurons, and look upon the water until he sees the lodges of the Chips." Then, pointing to the sleeping Dutchman, he asked :

"Is the man with the big gun brave?"

The hunter smiled, and Weptonomah was answered.

"If he puts Weptonomah's head into the jaws of his race," said the red outlaw, looking at Gottlieb contemptuously, "he shall step upon the trail of death. Weptonomah will have no cowards with him.

"Now let Weptonomah and his white brother sleep," suddenly said the Indian. "And when the Manitou has put out the lights in the great lodge, Weptonomah will drive the arrows of the Evil Spirit away. The white hunter will not be disturbed, for the Wyandots will not come here."

With this assurance that his sleep would not be broken, the hunter threw himself down before the fire, and soon the stillness of the Canadian forest was unbroken by the voice of any living thing save the harfang.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUTCHMAN'S SURPRISE.

THE spot where the hunter and his Teutonic companion found themselves, at the opening of our first chapter, was near the northern boundary of the present county of Lamber-ton, Upper Canada. Scarce a mile to the north were the shores of Lake Huron, and an hour's journey westward would have brought them to the east bank of the St. Clair river, which, as geographical students well know, connects Lakes Huron and St. Clair.

The country presented a dreary appearance, for a stubborn winter was preparing to leave, and the continuous drip, drip of melting snow upon the still frozen ground, would have made the lightest heart sad. The harfang, whose peculiar cries were the last sounds the hunter and Weptonomah had heard before falling into sleep, was out of his latitude; and it was his last night in the woods of Upper Canada. His native land was the shores of Hudson's Bay, and he had journeyed thus far southward to feast upon Canadian hares, and other animals whose juicy meat was agreeable to his palate.

To the narrative of Morgan Darrell we can add nothing, for he related every particular to his single red auditor. He was determined to recover the sweet companion of his days of sunshine, or perish in the noble attempt. He hoped to find her among the Chippewas, from whom he would rescue her, and restore her to her white-haired parent. Well he knew that the journey, as mapped out by the chief, was a long and dangerous one; but from the perils that would surely environ one who treads such a long trail, he did not shrink.

Hour after hour of that tedious night dragged its slow length along, and, as the first gray streak of dawn penetrated the wood, Morgan was aroused by the touch of the Wyandot's finger.

"Okki has put out the lights in his great wigwam," said

Weptonomah, pointing upward. "The white hunter should be awake."

Darrell at once arose, and was about shaking Gottlieb, to arouse him from his still deep sleep, when the chief caught his arm.

"Weptonomah will wake him," said he.

Morgan drew back to witness the chief's mode of awakening his friend.

Weptonomah bent over the sleeper. Then the red-man's mouth almost touched Gottlieb's ear, and he uttered the terrible war-cry of his nation:

"Ki-o-e-chee!"

The next moment the Teuton was on his feet, and his ludicrous and frightened appearance threw Morgan into a fit of laughter. Weptonomah folded his arms.

Gottlieb's first impulse was to grasp his blunderbuss, which he directed at the breast of the Wyandot. The Indian did not move a muscle, but gazed calmly into the funnel-like muzzle. He did not dream that the Dutchman would attempt to fire.

The hunter saw at once the chief's danger, and sprung forward to dash the clumsy but dangerous weapon from its frightened owner's hands. The Dutchman anticipated his action, and pressed the trigger. There was a loud report, but Weptonomah did not fall!

Gottlieb dropped the old-time weapon, and stared at the chief aghast.

Was Weptonomah a human? Had not Gottlieb carefully loaded the blunderbuss with eleven enormous slugs, an hour before he sunk to sleep the night just gone? And there stood the savage unharmed, save a slight burning by the powder! Weptonomah was a fiend! Thus thought and concluded the Dutchman.

And the hunter was not a little mystified, for he had witnessed the charging of the blunderbuss, and had remonstrated against the great and useless expenditure of lead.

Gottlieb continued to gaze upon the chief, wrapped in awe and wonderment, and he was further assured that he still lived when he heard him speak.

"Weptonomah and the pale-faced hunter will hunt the

pain-killer, and the man with the big gun will kindle a fire and roast some venison."

The Teuton was surprised. He expected to be tomahawked, or, if spared that, to be soundly thrashed for his murderous attempt on the chief's life.

He began at once to build a fire, while the hunter and Indian moved away. The chief, who still felt the sharp rheumatic pains, leaned heavily upon his white companion.

When beyond the Dutchman's hearing, Morgan expressed his astonishment at Weptonomah's miraculous, and to him unaccountable escape; and the chief said :

"Last night, while the white hunter slept, Weptonomah waked and drew the big balls from the great gun. The big coward will shoot all the white hunter's lead away. Here are the big balls," and from a little buck-skin pemmican-bag, which hung at his side, he took the identical eleven slugs.

Morgan took them, and his wonderment ceased.

In a short time the Indian pointed out the panacea for his aches.

It proved to be the well known indigenous perennial, small spikenard, which inhabits our country from Canada to North Carolina. It flourishes best in rocky and shady woods, and flowers in May and June.

The stock which Weptonomah discovered was a foot high, and broken near the top.

He directed the young hunter to procure him the root, which was soon in his hands. Then he sought several other perennials, and announced that he was ready to return to the fire.

Reaching it to find the venison finished, a breakfast was discussed, and the Dutchman was sent to a small stream near by, to procure two stones. The ice had to be broken before the stones could be procured, and at last he returned.

Heating one of the stones, Weptonomah placed the roots upon it, and pounded them until they were reduced to a hot pulp. In silence the two whites watched the compounding of the medicine, which was to drive the rheumatism from the chief's limbs.

At last the rude pestle was cast aside, and Weptonomah rubbed his limbs with the juicy pulp.

"When the sun rises again, Weptonomah will be strong," he said, "and he will cross the Short River and step upon the long trail that leads to the homes of the Chippewas."

The Indian's faith in the herbal compound was not shaken, as the dawn of another day proved. The rheumatic pains had entirely left his limbs, and he felt so invigorated that he declared he could run down the swiftest deer of the forest.

Immediately after partaking of a breakfast, they started for the St. Clair.

In less than an hour the river was reached, and Morgan was surprised to see the chief run to a large tree which stood upon the bank, and thrust his arm into quite a large hole several feet from its foot.

"Der red tuyfel is crazy," said Gottlieb, watching the strange movements of the chief. "He's von putty coon to take along mit us. He'll git us into tanger, so sure as his name is Vept— Vat him call himself?"

Morgan did not answer his companion, for he was too busily engaged in watching the Wyandot. Presently the red arm was withdrawn, and a rifle followed it. Then it was thrust into the tree a second time, to draw forth a small buck-skin sack, containing a small quantity of powder and balls.

The chief smiled and held the rifle up as he approached his friends.

"When the Wyandots made Weptonomah a hunted wolf, Nogiro, who loved him, brought his gun here, and hid it, and near by is his canoe. Weptonomah was trying to reach the big tree when the Evil Spirit's arrows struck him, on the hill. Nogiro shall not die by Weptonomah's hand."

No further explanation was needed, and a half-hour later the trio were speeding across the deep, dark river.

CHAPTER IV.

A NIGHT AMONG THE PINES.

THE point where our three friends crossed the St. Clair was just below the present town of Port Huron, and from thence the traveler struck off to the north-west, by the then almost obliterated trail which penetrated the great woods, running from Detroit to Michilimackinac.

In the twilight of the third day they gazed upon the waters of Saginaw Bay, from the western bank of the turbid river of the same name.

When night was fully upon them, their fire threw a ruddy glare upon the bosom of the Saginaw, and they conversed about the accomplishment of their designs.

"How far is it to der homes of der Chips, Vept— Mine Gott! I alvays furgets yer oder name?" inquired the Dutchman, confident that they were near their journey's end.

The chief noticed the anxiety with which Gottlieb awaited his reply; and, in a solemn voice, he said:

"Let the big hunter count the fingers of his strong hand, and let each finger be a hundred miles."

The Dutchman stared at Weptonomah, and ejaculated:

"One, two, three, four, five hundred miles! Gott in him-mel! It vill take us von whole year to git to der Chips, an' den git chipped fur our troubles. Mine Gott! I vish I had staid in New Yorick."

"The big hunter can return yet," said the chief. "The trail is plain to the Short River."

It was evident to Morgan that Weptonomah wished to be rid of the Dutchman; but he knew that Gottlieb never would retrace his steps alone.

"Vat! go pack py mineself?" cried Gottlieb, raising his hands in astonishment. "Der Ingun is crazy. Gottlieb von Klopt ish going to der huts of der Chips!"

That sentence settled the matter, and evidently disappointed Weptonomah, for he wrapped his blanket around his form and lay down upon the ground.

"Follow Weptonomah's example, Gottlieb," said Morgan. "This is my watch-night, you know."

The Teuton was not reluctant to comply; but before he did so, he bent forward and said to his friend:

"I'll shoost bet dat der gal a'n't mit der Chips, an' we'll never see New Yorick again."

The prophecy furnished mental food for Morgan, while the red and the white were sleeping.

The close of another day found the trio deep in the labyrinths of the great pine forest, which covered Crawford, Wyandot, Montmorenci and other northern counties of the main portion of Michigan.

Far above them the moon looked down and threw a weird light among the gaunt trees. Not a single cry disturbed the stillness that reigned throughout the woods, and the hunter heard distinctly the beating of his heart, when they paused and stood motionless and silent beneath a deadened pine.

"We will go no further to-night, will we, chief?" he said, and then started at the wild echo the silent wood brought to his ears.

"Weptonomah can tread the forest by night as well as by day," answered the Wyandot. "His eye is like the eagle's, and he will not miss the trail. Is the white hunter afraid of the night-walk?"

"No!" cried Morgan, somewhat hurt by the sarcastic question. "Like yourself, chief, I am afraid of nothing."

Weptonomah smiled, and silently pressed the young hunter's hand.

Then the chief stepped forward, and Darrell followed his example; but the Dutchman did not move.

"Morg," he cried, "are you goin' mit dat crazy Ingun?"

"Yes."

"Vy, you'll git bevildered and lost, for it ish mooch dark."

"If the big hunter is afraid, let him stand there and wait for the wolves," said the chief, without turning his head, or pausing a moment.

The mere mention of the ferocious animal that inhabited the great forests of Michigan, was enough to chill Gotlieb's blood.

He sprung forward.

"Vere the Ingun leads, Gottlieb von Klopt is not afraid to follow!" he said, boastingly. "He would face a regiment of growlin' wolves mit King William's gun;" and a defiant flourish of the blunderbuss brought the butt in dangerous proximity to the Wyandot's head.

He darted a fierce look at the Dutchman, but did not speak.

They pushed boldly on through the forest, Weptonomah leading the way.

The snow had almost entirely disappeared, and the wet leaves gave forth no sound when they trod upon them. For an hour their march was conducted in silence, when the chief suddenly paused and turned to the hunters with a strange look.

"Has the white hunter ever seen this tree before?" asked the Indian, as he struck a deadened pine.

Young Darrell looked at the tree, and answered that he failed to recognize it.

"Twice have Weptonomah and the pale-faces passed it to-night. The Hunted Wolf can not lie. His head is turned, and he has been walking in a circle!"

Morgan comprehended him immediately. They were lost!

"Weptonomah hoped to sleep on the shore of the black lake. But he must stay here till the sun tells him where he is."

There was no alternative but to spend the night among the pines.

They made preparations to do so, and, with great difficulty, enough dry boughs were found to produce a small fire, which gave but little warmth, and which would illy serve to keep the wild denizens of the woods at bay.

They had scarce seated themselves around the fire, when the terrible howl of the wolf, succeeded almost immediately by the child-like cry of the panther, reverberated through the wood.

The venison-fork fell from Gottlieb's nerveless hands, and the juicy meat would have been burned, had not Weptonomah snatched it from the fire.

"The howl of the wolf has no terror to the ears of the

big, brave hunter," said the chief, sarcastically, referring to the Dutchman's boast about facing a regiment of wolves.

"I ish not afraid of der wolves," he reiterated, in the face of his fright. "A pain shoost come scootin' along mine arm, an' I had to drop der meat."

Morgan could not repress a smile at Gottlieb's worthless excuse, and the chief looked at him incredulously.

The howls of the wolves grew more distinct, and it was evident to our three friends that they were upon their trail. Presently the sounds suddenly ceased, and all around them were to be seen pairs of fiery eyes.

When brought to bay, a coward will fight like the tiger; and when Gottlieb saw himself surrounded by the terrors of the forest, he sprung to his feet and seized his gun. The next moment it was at his shoulder, and the stunning report that followed, before Weptonomah could prevent it, was succeeded by the howl of several mortally wounded wolves. The slugs had done amazing execution.

"The big hunter is brave when he is near the trail of death," said Weptonomah. "By firing he will the sooner reach the dark river, for the wolves now are mad."

Gottlieb did not reply, but proceeded to reload his blunderbuss.

The chief looked at the young hunter; he was on his feet, with ready rifle. They were surrounded by near two hundred of the ferocious brutes, and the gang was continually augmented by fresh animals.

"So long as the fire blazes they will not attack us," said Darrell; "but when the fire burns low, then look out."

"The white hunter is right; let the big brave pile on the sticks."

"Der last stick is on der fire," said Gottlieb.

His words were true, and the fire was each minute burning lower.

Emboldened by the dying light, the wolves approached, and a simultaneous discharge of the three guns sent several of their number to the earth, to be immediately devoured by their companions.

"We can not kill every wolf," cried Darrell, as he saw the places of the dead filled by the half-famished living.

“No,” said the Wyandot. “More wood must burn to save Weptonomah and his brothers.”

The voice of the chief was spoken with a determined tone and the next moment he had snatched a burning stick from the fire.

Whirling it several times around his head, he passed it to his left hand, and, with his tomahawk in his strong right hand, he dashed among the wolves. Affrighted, they drew back before the torch; but not until the chief had broken several skulls with his heavy hatchet. At last he darted beyond their ranks, which again closed around the fire.

Afar in the wood the two whites saw the torch oscillating like a jack-o'-lantern, and presently it darted toward them. The wolves opened their ranks, and before them stood Weptonomah, with a full back load of fuel.

He threw the wood on the fire, and the flames shot high toward heaven.

“The wolves will not disturb the white hunters and the red-man,” he said, folding his arms and turning toward the animals with a look of boasting triumph.

“Wolves,” he cried, addressing them, “Weptonomah is one of you. He is a hunted wolf, whose fangs are sharp. Now depart to your dens, and harm not Weptonomah nor his friends.”

But the wolves greeted the conclusion of his speech with a chorus of demoniac howls, and, squatting upon their haunches, eyed the trio, who had turned to their venison again.

And thus, to the watchers and the watched, passed the lonely hours of the night.

CHAPTER V.

THE FATAL SHOT.

THE dawn of another day was doubly welcome, for it sent the disappointed wolves back to their lairs, and placed Wep-tonomah upon the right trail. They pressed on during the day, and passed another night among the pines.

But it was slow progress at best. The young hunter counted the hours of the way. Without any definite information, he had made up his mind that the lost girl was in these far-off regions, and his eagerness to solve the mystery of her fate made him, at length, irascible under each detention.

How angered, then, he was, when a half-day was lost in consequence of Gottlieb's stupidity, words can not tell. The trail led them up to the banks of a deep, rapid stream, which it was essential to cross. This could only be done by a raft. Logs being plenty, the raft was at length constructed, when forth they launched, and by the stream's force, were soon floated over to the other bank, and landed safely.

"Himmel! My goon—vere it pe?" exclaimed Gottlieb.

"What, is it not on the raft?" asked Darrell.

"Kah! I remempers! I shoost left it on te oder side!"

"What is to be done now, chief? Without his blunderbuss Gottlieb is worse than useless."

The chief thought over the matter a moment, then said:

"Weptonomah will cross over the cold waters and get the big rifle." And dropping from his shoulders his blanket, he dashed into the icy flood. A half-hour after, he returned with the weapon, which he delivered to the Dutchman, and at once started off on the trail in a rapid walk.

At last the Strait of Mackinaw was reached, when the trio paused long enough to slay an elk, and put in a new supply of meat. Not a human form greeted their eyes as they gazed across the comparatively narrow strait, which connects two of our great inland seas.

It was but a few months prior to the settlement of the well-

known island of Michilimackinac, by a mixed party of Hurons and Wyandots, under the direction of the Jesuit, Marquette.

Crossing the strait on the ice-pack, our friends again entered the forest; from which, twenty-six hours later, they emerged a short distance below the beautiful falls of St. Marie. Then they entered once more the forests of Canada; but kept near the shores of Superior.

The warlike Chippewas dwelt upon the northern line of the lake. Opposite them lived the Sacs, Foxes, and Menomonies. The great chief of the Chippewas, at the period of which we write, was Pindaro, whose prowess and warlike exploits had reached even the ears of the far southern tribes.

It was truly bearding the lion in his den for our daring trio to attempt to outwit Pindaro; and well they knew their swift doom if captured.

But, Weptonomah and Morgan did not shrink from the performance of their perilous duty; and as for Gottlieb, he would almost have given his precious life to have been at that moment in New York.

"When the sun sets," said Weptonomah, one day as they stood on the wooded bank of the lake, "the village of the Chippewas must be entered."

"So soon, chief? I thought it was many miles distant."

"Just beyond yon hill it lies," continued the Wyandot. "There dwells Pindaro, the great chief, and the White Lily."

Yora so near! The hunter's heart leaped for joy at the thought. Ah! he would rescue her that night, and bear her to her fond and aged father's arms. With a blind faith he really believed the lost maid was near!

They were leaning upon their guns, looking toward the hill that hid the Indian village from their view, when lo! a Chippewa appeared upon the summit.

Weptonomah caught Morgan's arm and whispered: "Down!"

The next instant the trio were lying flat upon the earth, looking at the Indian.

The young Chip—for young he appeared to his beholders—commenced to gesticulate wildly, as though he were delivering a harangue calculated to excite his people. For half an

hour he occupied the summit of the hill, when he slowly descended and was at last lost to view.

A short distance from the three hunters was a dense clump of evergreens; and, crawling along, they penetrated it, and lay down to recruit their strength for the work planned for the coming night.

Slowly the day waned, and, at last, the dark shadows of a cloudy night came. Here and there a rift in the clouds showed the glittering stars, which promised to aid the would-be girl-stealers with faint light.

"Is the white hunter ready to enter with Weptonomah the village of the Chippewas?" asked the chief, rising and tightening his belt.

"Ready and eager to go," returned the hunter, quickly. "Gottlieb, you will remain here until we return. Do not leave these bushes as you value your life. Indians may be lurking near."

"Does ye dink, Morg Darrell," cried the Dutchman, almost frightened out of his wits at the thought of being alone in that lonely, dangerous spot—"Say, does ye dink," he repeated, "dat I would stay 'ere all alone mit mineself? He—dat crazy Inguin—is goin' to take ye right into der jaws of death, an' I's goin' along."

If looks could kill, the stubborn Dutchman would have fallen a corpse before the fiery eyes of Weptonomah, whose fingers sought, under a sudden impulse, the handle of his tomahawk.

The hunter believed, for a moment, that the chief was going to strike; and he stepped between the twain.

"The big man is mad—mad as the wolf when the snow-water runs from his mouth," said Weptonomah, trying to bridle his anger. "He may go with Weptonomah, and the *brave* hunter; and if he rouses the Chippewas he shall die by the hands of the Hunted Wolf."

"I vill shoost creep along like der leetle snail," said Gottlieb, "an' der Chips vil dink dat Gottlieb Von Klopt, who fit mit King William on der Rhine, is a t'ousand mile from der city."

Weptonomah and Morgan left their rifles in the coppice; but the Dutchman, who could not see the necessity for such

action, when they were about to penetrate an Indian village, thrust his short blunderbuss under his ample jacket, buttoning his coat over it. His action escaped the eyes of his companions, who were busily preparing for their dangerous nocturnal venture.

Without adventure the trio gained the hill which commanded a view of the Chippewa village, that lay almost at its very base. In the dim light of the stars they saw the many birchen lodges that comprised the village, and, after satisfying themselves that no Indian was astir, they slowly began to descend.

Presently they entered the "town," and Weptonomah crawled in the direction of Pindaro's lodge. The white maiden he knew dwelt in the great chief's lodge, and there Morgan expected to find Isora.

Before entering the village, Weptonomah and Morgan drew their knives, and noiselessly Gottlieb opened his coat and drew forth the blunderbuss. The chief was in the advance, Morgan followed directly behind him, and the Dutchman kept close to his white friend's side.

Weptonomah had nearly reached Pindaro's lodge, when an accident occurred, which proved fatal to the designs of our adventurers.

Gottlieb was carelessly dragging his weapon at his side, when, suddenly, a half-buried stone struck the hammer then at half-cock and discharged it!

The tremendous recoil that succeeded, sent the weapon furiously against a lodge.

"Gott in himmel!" exclaimed the frightened Dutchman, scrambling to his feet to find the tomahawk of Weptonomah poised over his devoted head.

The Hunted Wolf thought not of flight; he was intent upon taking the life of the bungler. He could not restrain his rage, and swiftly the weapon started upon its descent.

But it was checked by the outstretched arm of the young hunter, and before the chief could push the barrier aside, a hundred Chippewas surrounded them!

Against such odds the trio made no resistance; but awaited the will of their captors.

"Didn't I tell ye, Morg, dat ve would never git pack to New

Yoriek?" muttered the Dutchman, along whose bones an indescribable horror seemed to run.

Morgan did not reply; he was thinking deeply upon their situation, and inwardly cursing the blundering Dutchman.

For some moments the Chippewas gazed awe-stricken upon the men who had bearded the lion in his den; and then the lips of the great Pindaro parted to shout a name.

"Weptonomah!"

The evil star of the Wyandot was truly in the ascendent—he was recognized!

And for him to be recognized was to prepare for death.

"Yes," he cried, "Weptonomah is here," and he struck his brawny breast. "Weptonomah is not afraid to travel the dark trail. But he is not dead yet. The Chippewas should kill him now, lest they hereafter feel his fangs."

"The Wyandot shall die before another sun sets," said Pindaro, "and his companions shall follow him upon the death-trail. Warriors, to the strong lodge with them, and woe to you if Weptonomah escapes. Encircle the great lodge, and let not an eye be closed to-night."

Then Pindaro haughtily left the scene, and shortly afterward the door of the "strong lodge" closed upon his prisoners.

CHAPTER VI.

"NOT SHE, BUT ANOTHER."

"Does the white hunter not need rest?" asked Weptonomah, when the trio found themselves in the almost palpable gloom of the strong lodge.

"Yes; but I shall not sleep much to-night, chief," answered Morgan.

"Is the hunter afraid to die?"

"The death-trail has no terrors for me, chief," answered the young man, a little nettled at the sarcastic tone in which Weptonomah had clothed his question. "But to perish in the sight of the great aim of one's life is terrible. And then she will see us die"

"Yes," said the Wyandot. "And she may recognize the white hunter."

"I will pray that she may not."

At this juncture the chief rose and left Morgan's side.

He was absent some minutes, when he returned, and threw himself upon the clayey earth.

"The strong lodge of the Chippewas is not built of the bark of trees, but of the trees themselves," he said. "They are so close that Weptonomah could not put his hand out. The chief and his friend must go out at the little door, which must be opened by a Chippewa."

"Has Weptonomah no friends among the Chippewas?"

"Friends!" cried the chief. "Has the pale-face forgotten that Weptonomah is a hunted wolf?"

"No," responded Morgan.

"Weptonomah does not love the big man," said the Wyandot, his thoughts recurring to Gottlieb's blunder which led to their capture. "He will smile when the fire licks his fat body. Had the white hunter not shot out his arm, the Chippewas would have had a dead prisoner."

"I love him, chief, though he has many faults," said Darrell, who thought of the honest Dutchman's devotion during their dreary journey from New York to the spot where they first encountered the Wyandot. "He has been to me a true friend, and faithful companion; and I thought of this when I put forth my arm. Let the past be buried, chief: and lets us stick to one another like brothers."

Weptonomah felt about in the Cimmerian gloom until his hand touched the hunter's. A silent pressure followed and the Indian spoke.

"The pale-faces are Weptonomah's brothers, and he will try to love the big man."

Not a word of their conversation was intelligible to Gottlieb, for, immediately after entering the wooden prison, he had fallen asleep. Long marches, and oftentimes sleepless nights, had wearied him. So he eagerly caught at the short rest offered him. So fatigued was he, that he forgot his dearly loved blunderbuss, his present situation, and the exciting scenes which would follow the dawn of day.

"Will the Chippewas give us a trial?"

"Pindaro is a great chief," answered Weptonomah. "He allows his prisoners to speak for themselves in the great council-house; and he murmurs not if his chiefs speak for them. Weptonomah will speak to-morrow; but he knows his strong talk will not save him."

"If we had time we might escape."

"The Hunted Wolf will plead for time."

"What will be your plea, chief?"

"To-morrow the hunter will hear, if his ears are open," evasively answered the Indian. "Weptonomah is going to close his eyes."

He stretched himself upon the earth, with a groan, and a minute later his deep, regular breathing told Morgan that he slept.

Presently the hunter—despite his thoughts of baffled schemes—followed the Wyandot's example, and silence filled the dark apartment.

With the first streaks of light that penetrated the Chippewa village, telling of the dawn of another day, Pindaro sprung from his couch of skins and hurried toward the strong lodge. Knowing the cunning and bravery of Weptonomah he feared that he had outwitted his scores of guards, and effected his escape.

The great Chippewa encountered a sub-chief, named Grandaro, at the door of the prison.

"Grandaro has not slept," said the sub-chief, hastening to proclaim his fidelity.

Pindaro paid no attention to the guard; but placed his lips to a crack in the door.

"Weptonomah!" he said.

"The hated Hunted Wolf is here, Pindaro," was the answer he received; and then he went away satisfied.

Weptonomah recognized the speaker's voice.

Presently the door was partly opened, and several pieces of dried venison were thrust in to the prisoners. The meat was devoured with a relish, and scarce another hour had elapsed when the measured tread of many feet was heard approaching.

"Pindaro's chosen braves are coming to conduct Weptono-

mah and his friends to the great council-house," said the chief, after listening a moment to the footsteps. "Let our hearts be brave within us, and let them not beat fast at the thought of torture. Big hunter," continued the Wyandot, suddenly grasping Gottlieb's hand, "be brave, and the Chippewas will say, 'Weptonomah's friends are not cowards.'"

The next moment the door was opened, and a band of Indians greeted the vision of the prisoners. They were, as Weptonomah had said, a set of picked braves under the sole command of Pindaro. The father of each was, or had been, a chief, and a warrior who could not boast of such ancestry never hoped to become "one of them."

At a sign from their leader, Weptonomah passed the threshold of the prison, and our white friends immediately followed his example.

They were placed in the center of the guard, which slowly, and in good order, took up their march toward the council-house. Large numbers of women and children pressed near to obtain a glimpse of the men whose tortures they expected soon to witness. Not a warrior, save those that composed the band, was visible. Morgan concluded that they were at the council-house.

At last the great structure was reached, and our friends were conducted to the center of it, when they were told to seat themselves upon the panther and bear-skins.

The chosen warriors had scarce joined their brethren, who formed a circle around the edge of the council-house, when Pindaro arose and in a short speech opened the trial.

But little of his speech was intelligible to Morgan, for the chief spoke his native language; and turning he asked Weptonomah to interpret it. The Wyandot gave him the main statements of the harangue. Pindaro was embittered against his prisoners, and in strong terms he advocated death.

"We have hearkened to the words of the swift young men of the Wyandots," he concluded, glancing at Weptonomah. "They told us that Weptonomah was a hunted wolf, and wolves must die! The pale-faces have entered the land of the Chippewas, and we want no pale-faces here."

A murmur of applause ran around the circle, when Pindaro resumed his seat. Weptonomah rose to reply.

He spoke in his own language, which he knew the Chippewas understood. His sentences followed each other in quick succession, and he wasted not a word in braggadocio, but spoke to the point.

"Warriors of the Chippewa nation," he began, "your great chief has had his talk, and Weptonomah will have his. The Hunted Wolf came not among you to bathe his fangs in your blood. He never strikes without just cause. He came with the white hunters; not they wish him. They seek a pale-faced maiden who is in Pindaro's lodge. They found Weptonomah near the Short River. The Evil Spirit had shot him full of fiery arrows, and he was about to step upon the trail of death. But they saved his life, and he promised to help them rescue the lost White Lily. He has kept his promise. Weptonomah speaks for his friends as well as himself. He wastes no words. Weptonomah knows that he must die before the sun goes down. He would live to see another rise. His death-song is long, and he must sing it in the night. So must also his white brothers. Let the Chippewas speak."

In rapid succession the warriors followed one another. All advocated death; but they differed as to the time. Some thought that, as the terrible Weptonomah was completely in their power, he should be permitted to live another day, that he might chant his death-song in the still hours of the night.

Among those who argued thus was a young warrior named Black Thunder.

Weptonomah could not but start when this Indian Demosthenes arose. He recognized him as one who had visited his nation some years before. They had been quite intimate, and parted in friendship.

"Time!" cried the Black Thunder of the Chippewas. "Time! What I would you send Weptonomah upon the death-trail without letting him sing his death-song? Is the Chippewa nation dying of thirst for blood? Yes, give the Hunted Wolf and his friends time, and when *we* step upon the long, dark trail of death, Kitchi-Manitou will recollect the deed."

The Wyandot knew that Black Thunder's speech would not pass unheeded, and he felt that among many enemies he had one friend.

The young Chippewa was the last speaker, and when he had seated himself, the vote began to be taken. Two questions were to be decided, viz: in what manner shall the prisoners die? Shall the time requested be given them?

The result of the vote upon the first question Weptonomah did not doubt. The Chippewas voted unanimously for the stake. For some time the second vote was in doubt, and the excitement was intense when it was seen that Pindaro's word must decide the question.

He arose.

Would he pronounce for time, or for immediate death?

Weptonomah hoped that Black Thunder's speech had influenced him, and he bent forward to catch Pindaro's utterance.

The Chippewa looked round upon his warriors and noted one thing. His bravest and most enlightened chiefs had voted for time. He would adhere to the stronger party.

Then he spoke.

"Pindaro speaks for time."

Wild shouts from the party whose votes he had approved greeted him, and the trial was over.

"Weptonomah and his friends can sing their death-songs in the night," said Pindaro. "Braves, conduct them to the strong lodge."

Weptonomah was greatly pleased at the decision, and he recounted his daring adventures to the chosen warriors as they walked along.

Suddenly he turned his head and gazed among the lodges to his right.

A few feet from him stood a white girl, dressed like a chief's daughter. Her dark eyes were gazing curiously upon her captive people.

"Yonder is the White Lily," said the Wyandot to Morgan, whose head was bowed upon his breast.

With a quick start the hunter looked up, and riveted his gaze upon the girl.

"My God!" he cried, staggering back, "*it is not she, but another!*"

Weptonomah supported him the remainder of the distance to their strong prison.

The hunter had spoken truly. *The captive of the Chippewas was not Isora!* It was a dark-eyed and dark-haired maiden, grown almost to full womanhood!

He had journeyed one thousand miles, to look upon an unknown girl, and—*to die!*

CHAPTER VII.

FOR OLD ACQUAINTANCE'S SAKE.

THE night that succeeded the day of the trial was starless, for clouds of the blackness of darkness overspread the heavens. Over the deep, dark woods the clouds hung low, and the waves of the mighty lake boomed along the shore like thunder. The storm-king was abroad in his might, for, as the night deepened, the wind increased until the forests fairly trembled beneath his touch.

The warriors who guarded the strong lodge were commanded by the young warrior orator, Black Thunder, who had been accorded the position of guard as a token of deference to his expressed consideration for the Wyandot prisoner.

Before the door he placed himself, after having surrounded the hut with his band. For an hour or more he stood motionless, when a terrific burst of wind came to make all start.

The young chief then stepped aside and spoke to a sub-chief.

"The storm is great," he said, "and Black Thunder fears for his lodge. He must go and see. Let the Fox take Black Thunder's place till he returns."

The Indian stepped before the door, and the young chief glided away in the darkness.

He went directly to the council-house. At the center pole lay the arms and ammunition of the three prisoners. The reader will recollect that Weptonomah and Morgan left their rifles and pouches in the coppice before they entered the village. The morning following their capture, the weapons were discovered and carried in triumph to the council-house.

Reaching the center pole, Black Thunder paused and listened. He heard nothing but the sounds of the storm. Not a Chippewa save him and the guards was abroad.

Stooping, he gathered up the arms and buck-skin pouches, and left the gloomy council-house as noiselessly as he had entered.

He did not pause till he reached the hill mentioned in a foregoing chapter. Upon its summit he deposited his burden and ran toward the village. Before he reached it the storm burst with renewed force upon him. There was with the wind a sprinkling of rain. Now and then a drop struck him, and caused him to quicken his gait.

It was not through fear of a drenching that he ran. Water will render powder unfit for use for a time.

Thus thought Black Thunder.

At last he reached the strong lodge, to find but three Indians guarding it!

"Where are the young braves?" he asked.

"In their lodges. They fear the fearful noise and cries the Manitou has sent. When the storm is over they will return."

"And would not Fox-foot, the Rattlesnake, and the Eagle like to rest in their lodges?"

"They would," were the words which quickly and simultaneously parted the lips of the three remaining guards.

"They may go," said Black Thunder, "and when the storm is over they must return. Black Thunder will guard the doomed prisoners of the Chippewas."

Eager to be released, the red-men sprung to their feet, and immediately disappeared in the gloom.

The sub-chief turned and applied his ear to a crevice, that admitted the night air into the prison.

Not a sound save the heavy breathing of the three sleepers reached his ears.

Weptonomah had sung his death-song before the arrival of the storm. He and his friends had ceased to hope for assistance from Black Thunder, whom Weptonomah had thought might befriend them for old acquaintance' sake.

From such a strong hut as their prison was, escape, without outside assistance, was not to be thought of.

Therefore they had thrown themselves down to sleep their last sleep, they thought, save the long sleep of death.

When Black Thunder heard the regular breathing in the interior of the hut, he smiled.

"The hunters are brave," he muttered; "they sleep when they are near the trail of death. They are not afraid to die. They shall not die!"

The last sentence was spoken in a determined voice, and the speaker gently opened the door.

"Weptonomah," he said, scarcely above a whisper.

The Wyandot was awake in an instant.

"Black Thunder has come to save the prisoners of his people," said the Chippewa. "He has not forgotten the days he spent with Weptonomah in the great village of the Wyandots. Let the Wyandot and his friends follow Black Thunder, for the storm will soon be still."

Weptonomah aroused Morgan and the Dutchman, to whom, in a few low words, he explained the unexpected change in their fortunes.

Their joy was unbounded, but, not a word was passed between them until the hill was gained.

Then Black Thunder gave them their weapons.

Again their surprise was unbounded, and thanks, which but poorly represented their gratitude, were showered upon the Chippewa.

"Black Thunder and the hunters must part," he said, suddenly interrupting Morgan in the midst of grateful expressions. "The storm is becoming still, and they may return to find Black Thunder absent. The white maiden is not among the Chippewas. But she is *with the Eries*, for the Frenchman named Garroux came hither from them six moons ago on a mission. He said his daughter was with them, and would marry one of their chiefs as soon as she was old enough!"

A dead silence followed the announcement. It was so unexpected and so startling that Darrel was dumbfounded.

"The trail to the country of the Eries is a long one," added the Chippewa.

"Weptonomah has traversed it," interrupted the Wyandot.

"Then he will guide the pale-faces?"

"Yes."

"Hunters, good-by. The Chippewa will pray that Kitchi-Manitou will guide you. Let your feet be swift, for my people will follow. In the happy hunting-grounds we will meet again."

A silent pressure of hands followed, and, in the darkness, they separated.

"On the right trail at last, thank God!" murmured Morgan, as they hurried down the hill.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BLUNDERBUSS SPEAKS AGAIN.

READER, from the close of our last chapter to the opening of the present one, there is a hiatus of three months.

During this period, Weptonomah and his companions have been journeying, with varied adventures, which have no bearing upon our romance, from the island in Lake Superior, to the shores of Lake Erie, and the home of the Indian nation of a like name.

For one entire week they were compelled to remain on the island. A thorn in Gottlieb's foot proved indeed a thorn to their journey. The affected member swelled to twice its natural size, and occasioned unendurable pain. Still, to the sufferer's credit be it said, he bore his affliction like a real hero. At last the Wyandot's herbal preparation reached the right spot, and produced the desired effect. So soon as the Dutchman could walk, they set off for Lake Erie.

It was night in a forest within the present limit of Cuyahoga county, Ohio.

Two forms were stretched beneath the boughs of a giant oak, while another leaned against the body of the tree. The stars threw a vague light upon the sleepers, whose features with close scrutiny might have been recognized by their friends. They were Morgan Darrell, and the noble Weptonomah.

The sentry above them was our old friend, the Dutchman

He was wide awake and continually trying to penetrate the uncertain light, and look further into the forest.

His cowardice was fast leaving him, and under the eye of the Wyandot, he had lately performed several creditable exploits. Therefore, in view of this, and to encourage him to persevere, our two bosom companions had deemed it safe to let him stand sentinel while they slumbered.

True, they were on dangerous ground; but nature demanded repose, and to rightly perform the hazardous work in store for them, they must heed her calls.

For two hours Gottlieb heard nothing but the noise of falling leaves, for it was autumn; and the sere and yellow foliage was leaving the trees, to be, ere many days, covered with snow.

"I shoost vish someding, 'sides dem leafs would stir," muttered the corpulent sentry. "Here it's nothin' but drap, drap, drap, all der time. Vy can't an' owl hoot, or a panther squeal, or a volf howl? Shoost *once* vould do. I shoost vish an' Ingum—a great big fellar—would stand py dat tree," and as he concluded, the guard aimed deliberately at the body of a large sycamore which stood about forty feet from him.

The bark upon it was almost white, and the tree presented quite a goblin-like appearance.

Suddenly, to Gottlieb's great surprise, a dark body appeared against the sycamore. The longer he looked the taller it grew, until its proportions were truly gigantic. It was an Indian warrior full fifteen feet in hight; and the black feathers, which ornamented his head, were not less than five feet in length.

So plainly visible was the dusky giant, that the not a little terrified Tenton could count the bears' claws that ornamented the bosom of his hunting-frock.

At last the Indian seemed to stride forward, and Gottlieb's eye glanced from the gun-barrel to his breast.

He believed that it was the giant's intention to murder them; and should he not take advantage of his plans and bring him down? Another step and the Indian might spring upon him, and, of course, death would follow.

Yes, he would shoot the red monster, and thus save his life and the lives of his sleeping friends

Summoning his courage to steady his nerves, he again glanced along the blunderbuss, and drew the trigger toward him !

A loud report followed, and the giant disappeared !

Smoke was yet leaving the weapon, when the Dutchman found the hand of Weptonomah upon his shoulder.

Morgan stood at the chief's side.

"Is the big hunter's head cracked?" demanded the Wyandot, giving Gottlieb a vigorous shake.

"No; but I t'inks der giant's ish. I tell ye, Vepty, I hit 'im. Ye'll find about a dozen slugs in his pody."

"In whose body, Gottlieb?" demanded Darrell, before Weptonomah could speak.

"Der Ingun's—der giant's. 'Ee was standin' pefore der sycamore. 'Ee vas twenty feet tall, an' his plume vas ten feet long. I tooks good aim, an' over he tumbles shoost so soon as she cracked."

"Gottlieb, you have seen no Indian," returned the young hunter. "We may be prisoners before morning in consequence of your foolish act."

"I tell ye I did shoot a pig Ingun," persisted the Dutchman, "an' I pets my gun dat he is right out dar, stiff an' cold."

"Weptonomah and the hunter will go and see," spoke the Wyandot, striding toward the sycamore.

Gottlieb, believing that he was in the right, followed them.

They soon reached the spot where the Dutchman had seen the Indian fall. No dead or wounded savage was to be seen, and Gottlieb stared blankly around.

"Ha!" exclaimed Weptonomah, "no red-man is here."

Gottlieb did not reply.

"Gottlieb, it is as I suspected. You saw no Indian. The form was merely an imaginary one," said the hunter, trying to convince him.

But Gottlieb could not be convinced.

"We will look at the tree," the chief said.

They advanced to the sycamore and found it scarred by slugs.

"How many slugs were in your gun, Gottlieb?" asked Darrell, turning to the Dutchman.

"Shoost *sixteen*—der usual load."

The hunter counted the bullet-marks aloud, and they footed up just sixteen. Not a slug had missed the tree!

"What does the big hunter think now?" said Weptonomah, triumphantly.

"Dat ev'ry slug went clear through der Ingun an' hit der tree."

The chief could not repress a smile, and Darrell laughed aloud.

"We must leave this tree," said the chief. "The great noise may have reached the sharp ears of some Eries, and they are swift of foot. Ah! they are here now."

The Wyandot's last word was followed by a yell, and the patter of many moccasined feet smote their ears.

The succeeding moment, full fifty painted and plumed Eries sprung upon them. Weptonomah's rifle cracked, and one of their enemies fell. He was immediately followed by another, who had received a ball from Darrell's gun.

Before the fearful odds the three hunters did not quail. With clubbed rifles they struck right and left, and Erie after Erie went down before them.

But their foes too far outnumbered them, and the conflict drew to a close.

Suddenly Weptonomah left Darrell's side, and the next moment he and Gottlieb found themselves prisoners.

Several Eries pursued the chief a short distance, and returned. In the darkness the Hunted Wolf easily eluded them.

Darrell and his companion were bound, and the march to the Erie village was taken up. The Indians were highly elated at their success, but regretted the escape of Weptonomah, whom they had recognized. They examined Gottlieb's blunderbuss very attentively, and, from their conversation over it, Darrell knew that it had guided them to the sycamore.

For a long time the hunter walked along with bowed head. Suddenly he raised it, and asked the warrior who walked at his side:

"Does a white maiden, with a Frenchman, dwell among the Eries?"

The savage replied in rude French that the hunter's words were unintelligible to him.

Then Darrell put the question in French.

"The white hunter will see when he reaches the village of the Eries," was the reply, and to further questions the savage returned a dogged silence.

At last, when day dawned, the village came in sight, and into the strong lodge our friends were thrust, to await within its gloomy portals the pleasure of the sachem of the Eries concerning them.

They would, they knew, be doomed to die; but would they perish?

Would Weptonomah attempt a rescue? or had he deserted them forever?

CHAPTER IX.

AMONG THE ERIES.

FOR an hour our friends remained in the strong wigwam, which was constructed similar to the one they had occupied while prisoners to the Chippewas.

During this time the council was forming, for it had been decided that they should have an immediate hearing.

From the earnest looks and conversation of the savages who guarded the door of their prison, Darrell readily inferred this, and almost gave himself up for lost. There was no Weptonomah now to plead for time, and no eloquent Black Thunder to change the minds of their captors.

His intended speech, he knew, would make no favorable impression upon the Indians, to most of whom it must be unintelligible, but might hasten his doom. Still he would deliver it, come weal or woe.

Suddenly a Bedlam seemed to approach the prison. The sachem's guards were coming to conduct the prisoners to the council-house. They were followed by large numbers of toothless hags and middle-aged women, armed with sticks and stones, and every conceivable thing that would injure human flesh.

It was the determination of the motley party to mob the

prisoners, because they had slain several Eries. The slain had been husbands, sons, brothers, relations of the fiery Hecates, who sought to take the law into their own hands, and be terribly revenged.

The guard, which was composed of a dozen warriors, made no efforts to keep the yelling pack away until the prison was reached. Then a young warrior exhorted them to quietly depart to their lodges, and await and abide by the decision of the council. The exhortation was received by a volley of clubs and stones, from which the Erie was glad to escape.

Then the Eries who had been guarding the hut, held a consultation with the messengers of the council; and it was decided to conduct the prisoners thither at all hazards.

From within our friends divined the state of affairs without.

Not a shade of paleness crossed Darrell's face, and Gottlieb was remarkably calm.

"They may overpower our guards, Gottlieb," said the master, as the noise without seemed to increase.

"Den we must fight!"

"Have you any arms?"

Gottlieb unbuttoned his coat, and drew forth a knife.

"De niggers got not dish," he said, triumphantly, as he held the knife aloft. "Ven ve were about to be took, I shoost put 'im in here, an' dey didn't find 'im."

Darrell admired the Dutchman's forethought, and remarked that he had executed a like movement.

"Put up your knife, Gottlieb, and do not draw it until the critical moment has arrived."

The Dutchman obeyed, but left his coat open that he might readily grasp the weapon.

Presently the rude but strong door was suddenly pushed open, and they were commanded to step forth. They obeyed, to be immediately surrounded by the guards.

A moment later the march to the council-house began. The Indians formed a hollow square, and marched rapidly with drawn tomahawks. For some distance the angry mob made no active demonstration. It seemed to be preparing for a grand attack.

The faces of the guards wore a stern look, and they would undoubtedly defend their prisoners to the last extremity. They

were completely surrounded by the mob, and any attempt to break through it would result in a bloody collision.

Finally the plans of the would-be avengers matured, and the word of attack went from mouth to mouth.

They suddenly left the front of the square, and massed their forces on the left. Then at a prearranged signal, a hideous yell from the toothless, repulsive leader of the mob, they threw themselves upon the guards.

At the onset the Eries wavered, but quickly recovered and began to use their tomahawks. The skulls of several of the attacking party were cloven, and the mob withdrew to renew the battle. Several guards were disabled by clubs, and the remainder despaired of victory, unless they were reinforced from the council-house.

Up to this moment our friends had not drawn their knives; but now they did so, and received the approval of the guards.

The death of several of their number had rendered the attacking party nearly insane, and, after a breathing-spell, they rushed again upon the guards.

But, scarce a blow had been struck, when the hurried tramp of many feet reached their ears, and the next minute a large band of warriors burst upon them.

Instantly every club was dropped, and the mob dispersed.

The guards breathed freer, and, without further trouble, reached the council-house. Through the circle of warriors our friends were conducted, and placed beside the center-pole of the structure. Very soon the council opened.

The first speech was from Ethepeate, the great sachem of the Eries.

It overflowed with bitter invective against his prisoners.

While he was speaking, Darrell looked around, hoping to encounter the face of the French renegade.

At last he saw a white face at the further end of the council-house. The features were decidedly French, and the hunter doubted not that they belonged to Louis La Gorreaux.

But he had not long to gaze upon him, for he was reminded that he must speak in his defense. He arose.

He did not tell them that he was searching for a white girl, lest it would arouse the suspicions of the renegade. He said that he was hunting for a lost brother.

His speech fell impotent upon the hearts of the warriors, and, as he resumed his seat, the strange Frenchman strode forward.

"Will the Eries believe the white liar?" he cried. "I know they will not. He came to scalp us—your wives and little ones. Let him die, and let also his ashes be thrown to the four winds of heaven."

The speech was greeted with yells of approval, and the renegade, after glaring fiercely at Darrell, returned to his place.

The next speaker broached the subject of Weptonomah, and argued that the whites should live until the hunted Wyandot was caught, when all should die together.

This proposition immediately found favor, and speaker after speaker advocated it. The Eries bitterly hated Weptonomah, and many would have given their right hand for the privilege of torturing him as their fiendish natures dictated.

In a short time there was an entire revulsion of feeling, and it was almost unanimously voted to spare the prisoners' lives until the Wyandot was taken.

The Frenchman was beaten; but he did not despair. He suggested that the prisoners be given the freedom of the village during the days which would intervene between the present one and their death. They were to pledge themselves not to escape.

Strange to say the suggestion was acted upon; and the desired pledge was given.

Then the Frenchman muttered:

"They are as good as dead now. If they live till to-morrow night my name is not La Gorreaux. I have seen that young fellow's features before. Ah! I have it now; he is a Darrell. And what brought him here? The gal, of course!"

Nearly overcome at their good fortune, Darrell and his companion left the council-house amid a crowd of Indians.

Suddenly these words were whispered in his ear.

"I know you, M. Darrell. *You will never leave this village alive!*"

He started and look around.

The Frenchman stood but a few feet from him, and his manner indicated that he had just spoken.

Morgan watched him till he moved away, and then murmured:

“I am truly in the lion’s den now!”

And he was.

CHAPTER X.

THE LONG LOST.

DURING the trial of the prisoners, which the reader has witnessed, a far different scene was transpiring a short distance from the council-house.

In the center of a wigwam a young and exceedingly beautiful white girl reclined upon a couch of furs.

Her youthful features denoted her age to be near fifteen, and the sweet expression visible on every lineament of her oval face was a true index to the heart that beat beneath her beautifully ornamented doe-skin sacque.

Luxuriant shining tresses of golden hair fell over her faultlessly formed shoulders and swept the pillow beneath her head. Her arms, which were not covered by sleeves, were ornamented with bracelets, composed of the long, soft hair of some river animal. The long and close-fitting fawn-skin gown hid her nether limbs, but displayed two tiny fairy feet incased in a pair of beautiful moccasins.

She was gazing into the dark eyes of an Indian girl who sat at one side of the couch. The Erie was two years the white’s girl’s senior, and the fairest red flower that ever bloomed in the great forests. Certain ornaments upon her person told that she was the favorite daughter of a chief, and thus entitled to respect.

For several minutes silence had reigned in the lodge, and the two girls seemed to be listening for what they dreaded to hear.

“The trial seemed to be a tedious one, Bright Star,” said the white maiden, in a silver voice.

“Yes,” replied the Indian, “Evil Eye was speaking when Bright Star departed.”

"He will advocate death," and the face of the speaker suddenly became pale. "He has a great deal of influence among the Eries, and his words to-day will sink deep into their hearts. I wonder where my captive people came from?"

"Leaping Panther saw Bright Star standing afar off, and he left the council and came to her. He said that the pale-faces must die. Ethepeate had spoken for death."

"But, did Leaping Panther say whence came my people?" and the questioner awaited with bated breath the Indian's reply.

"He said that they came from a great village far toward the rising sun, where a great river meets the big waters."

"From New York! Oh! Bright Star, your answer has stirred up painful memories! There I was a happy child—before he with the Evil Eye carried me by force away to the wilderness. I wonder if my dear parents live? Oh, dear Lord, give me a sign by which I may know that they live."

She looked imploringly toward heaven, and then burying her face in her hands, she sobbed aloud.

The chief's daughter cast a pitying look upon her companion, and gently stroked her golden hair.

"Bright Star is sorry, too," she said, in a voice low and sad. "She loves the pale-faced maiden whom Evil Eye brought to the village of the Eries. When she weeps, Bright Star is sad, and when she smiles, Bright Star is happy. Let Soft Eyes look up and smile that Bright Star's heart may be light."

The white maiden raised her head, smiled through her tears, threw her arms around the Indian's neck, and kissed her.

"Bright Star, you are the only one who loves me in this wide world. Without you I should, like the flower droop and die. Sister, kiss me."

The beautiful Indian imprinted a kiss on the tear-wet cheek, and then parted the curtains of the lodge, for a stealthy footstep had reached her ears.

A moccasined foot disappeared around the wigwam.

"It was Amasqua," she said, turning to her companion.

"He is my persecutor's spy," said the white girl, who, the reader has doubtless surmised ere this, was ~~cast~~ Isora Winters.

"Yes; Amasqua is a wicked Erie," Bright Star replied. "He is the spy of Evil Eye, and works only for him. Soft Eyes is never out of his sight."

"You speak truly, Bright Star. The Indian's dark, flashing eyes are ever upon me. I believe that he stands at the door of my lodge while I sleep."

The Indian girl was about to reply, when Isora suddenly started and continued :

"The council is over. I hear the voices of the returning chiefs."

Bright Star again parted the curtains and looked out.

"What can have been the decision of the council?" she quickly and surprisedly exclaimed. "Yonder are the two white hunters walking alone."

"Where? where?" cried Isora, springing to her side.

"There," said the Indian, pointing toward Gottlieb and Morgan, who were walking together, apart from the chiefs.

For some minutes Isora surveyed the twain before she spoke.

"One of them is a German, I should think," she said, "and the other evidently is an American. But, why have they such freedom? Surely the council has not set them entirely at liberty. I do not understand it."

"Bright Star will go and ask Leaping Panther," said the Indian, and the next moment she had left the lodge.

Isora continued to gaze upon the whites, until their steps led them behind a lodge.

Then she threw herself back upon the couch of skins and covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, God! I bless thee that thou hast permitted me to see one of my own people once more!" she cried. "Why didst thou guide him here? Does the American know that I am the prisoner of La Gorreaux? No, he can not. For three years I have been his captive; and until this day I have not looked upon a white face other than his! He would make me his wife. But I will not be his wife. Sooner will I bury my knife in my heart."

At this moment the curtains of skin were parted by some one outside of the wigwam, and a form darkened the entrance.

Isora noticed the shadows that suddenly filled the lodge, and looked up.

The face she saw was covered with black hair, and a pair of small, evil eyes looked down upon her.

She recognized her captor—the French renegade!

He stepped into the apartment, and stood over her.

"Well, birdie, I have returned," he said, smiling.

"The council is over, then?"

"Yes."

"What is the decision?"

"The prisoners are to die."

"Then why are they not in the strong lodge?"

He started at her question.

"You have seen them?"

"Yes."

He turned and stepped toward the door.

"Curse the luck," he hissed. "I had hoped that she would not get to see *him*. She and that Indian gal will plot against me now. But, I will inform her that it is useless."

He suddenly paused, and then returned to Isora's side.

"Girl," he said, "you will never see them again. Do you want to know what brought them here?"

"Yes."

He stooped and hissed in her ear:

"They came for you!"

A sudden paleness overspread Isora's face, a shriek welled from her throat, and she fell back upon the skins in a deathly swoon.

The bearded monster smiled at the torture his words had inflicted, and strode from the lodge.

"Her swoons are never dangerous," he muttered. "In a few minutes she will be all right. But, she is powerless to aid them. With Amasqua's eyes upon her, and mine on them, I have nothing to fear. One blow, and he is gone. That blow shall be given to-night."

"There is many a hill between the Evil Eye and the setting sun," significantly said a low voice almost at the very feet of the renegade.

He heard it not, and soon disappeared among the wigwams.

The speaker rose to her feet and entered the lodge.

It was Bright Star.

air

CHAPTER XI.

WARNED AND FOILED.

I WONDER if they will guard us to-night," said Morgan, as he and Gottlieb were seated in front of the strong lodge, discussing a steak of venison which an Indian had brought them.

It was the evening succeeding their trial.

"Ye may shoost depend dat dey vill," answered the Dutchman. "Dey vill shoost tell us to go in here d'rectly, an' put a dozen of der red fellers before der door."

"It is quite likely, from the words that were whispered in my ears immediately after our trial."

"Who's bin whisp'rin' to ye, Morg?" inquired Gottlieb, looking strangely at his companion.

"The Frenchman."

"Vat he say?"

"I know you, M. Darrell. You shall never leave the village alive.' These were his very words."

"Der tuyfel!" ejaculated the Teuton.

"Yes, Gottlieb, he has recognized me, and, of course, knows what brought us here. We are in the lion's den."

"An' if we do not escape, he vil eat us."

"True."

"We must be on der look-out. Dey vill not catch old Vepty, an' we'll git to stay here a long time. Let us act very pretty for a day or two, an' den make von big preak."

"Just my ideas exactly, Gottlieb. I think we will never see Weptonomah again. Not for a long time, at any rate. Therefore we must shift for ourselves. The night succeeding to-morrow, every thing being favorable, I propose the attempt. We can mature our plans to-morrow."

"Very well, Morg. I'll shoost look around to-morrow, an' examine dish place by daylight. Mebbe we kin get through der roof. Sharmany on der Rhine! shoost look dere, Morg."

The hunter looked in the direction that Gottlieb was pointing, and beheld a young Indian girl advancing obliquely toward them. Upon a piece of bark before her she carried something that, at once, reminded them of a coon roasted whole.

She smiled as she neared them, and at last placed the bark plate and its still-smoking burden at their feet. It was, indeed, a coon.

"Bright Star has brought the pale-faces a nice fat coon," she said. "It was slain to-day, by the arrow of Leaping Panther. Let the hunters partake of the choice meat."

She spoke French quite fluently, which not a little surprised the hunter.

"Where did the fair Erie learn French?" he asked.

"The men with the crosses have been among my people," she said. "But, Bright Star mastered the pale-faces' language at the side of Soft Eyes."

"Soft Eyes," echoed Morgan. "Who is Soft Eyes?"

"The captive of Evil Eye."

Darrell's heart leaped into his throat.

"She is white?"

"As the hunter."

With a great effort he was calm.

"Does she know that we are here?"

"Evil Eye told her."

"And what does she say?"

"She weeps to go with the pale-faces to her home, toward the rising sun."

"She shall go!"

The lips closed over the determination, and the Indian smiled.

"Bright Star must return to her father's lodge," she suddenly said. "She has a message and a warning for the white hunter."

"The message first," said Morgan.

"At this hour, after another day, Soft Eyes will meet the hunter at the spring, at the foot of the hill. Bright Star may be with her."

"Now the warning," and Darrell thought that he could almost guess it.

"She would tell him to *watch the renegade!* Let the white hunter close not his eyes to-night," she said, slowly, and in a low voice.

"Why?"

She did not seem to hear the interrogative.

"Has he a knife?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Let it be in his hand while he is in the strong lodge."

She glanced at the Dutchman, who was devouring with great gusto a portion of the coon, and turned on her heel.

Morgan put out his hand to detain her, but she was beyond his reach, and did not pause when he spoke her name.

"I was going to send a message to Isora," he muttered. "But, she will doubtless tell her my determination, and that will suffice till we meet to-morrow night. Gottlieb, how is the coon?"

"Goot!" responded the Dutchman, filling his mouth with the savory meat. "Do ye vant any of it, Morg?"

"No. I have eaten enough. The venison was excellent."

"Yaw, but can't be 'pared to der coon."

For a moment Morgan watched his companion enjoying himself, when he suddenly paused in his process of mastication.

"Morg?"

"Well, Gottlieb?"

"Vat does ye think dey'll do mit King William's gun?"

"They will keep it."

"Are you sure dat dey'll not preak 'er?"

"The Eries never destroy their prisoners' weapons. They keep them in the council-house as trophies."

"Den I'll sleep sound to-night. I've been in a big sweat all der day, apout King William's gun. I thought dey'd preak 'er."

Again Margan quieted Gottlieb's fears, and he resumed his repast.

In an incredibly short space of time nothing remained of the coon but a pile of bones, and while the Dutchman was testifying to the esculent qualities of the animal, they were approached by several Indians.

"The pale-faces must go into the strong lodge," said one, who was none other than Amasqua, the Frenchman's spy.

Without replying, our friends arose and entered the hut, the door of which was closed behind them.

"I'm goin' to sleep, an' dream of old Sharmany an' King William's dragoons," exclaimed Gottlieb, as he threw himself upon the earth.

Morgan did not think it expedient to inform his fellow-prisoner of Bright Star's warning. He could cope with the strongest assassin, and Gottlieb might hinder, rather than assist him. He thought that an attempt would, ere dawn, be made upon his life, and he hoped that the would-be assassin would prove the renegade.

Gottlieb had scarcely touched the ground when he began to snore, and Darrell stretched himself upon his side, facing the door. The roof of the hut was composed of thick bark, and the bright moonlight penetrated the apartment between two of the rude shingles.

It bathed the door in light, and upon the spot, Morgan fixed his eyes.

An hour passed, and night had fairly thrown her mantle around the Erie village.

Another hour, but no movement from without. The hunter had not closed an eye.

At last, when the third hour had almost waned, the door opened a little, and noiselessly.

A human head was thrust into the hut, and the hunter saw that it belonged to an Indian. The assassin was not the renegade.

Morgan watched the head, and breathed regularly, to counterfeit slumber.

Presently the head, which was devoid of ornament, dropped to the ground, and the body of its dusky owner followed it into the hut. The savage was entering like the snake.

The hunter clutched the handle of his trusty knife; and not a movement of his stealthy foe escaped him.

The Erie was certain that his victim was sleeping, for the regular breathing completely deceived him.

Another foot, and the Indian would strike. But that movement was never taken.

Suddenly Amasqua felt a strong hand upon his throat. He essayed to resist, but his efforts were brought to a sudden termination by the keen blade of his antagonist, which pierced his heart.

The almost noiseless struggle was over, and Gottlieb, undisturbed, slept on.

Morgan wiped the heart-blood from his knife, and again fixed his eyes upon the door. Perhaps another Erie wanted to follow Amasqua to the far-off happy hunting-grounds.

But the hours drearily waned, and near day Darrell fell asleep beside the slain Indian.

Suddenly a hand touched him. He sprung to his feet. An Indian faced him, pointing mutely to the corpse.

"He tried to kill me," explained Morgan, "but failed."

The savage took his departure, bearing the body with him.

Presently the great Ethepeate arrived in person. He was followed by the Frenchman and a score of Indians.

The hunter met them at the door.

"The hunter has slain Amasqua," said the chief.

"He entered with a knife."

"It is a lie!" cried La Gorreaux, whose rage at the death of his spy and the failure of his plans was boundless. "He crept out, murdered Amasqua, and dragged the body into the strong lodge. Let him die at once. I demand his life, for Amasqua was my brother."

"No," said Ethepeate, calmly, "the hunter shall not die till Weptonomah comes. For twenty hours my braves have been upon the Wyandot's trail, and they will not fail."

Then he turned again to Morgan.

"Does the white hunter want a guard? His life may again be attempted."

"A guard might not come amiss," answered Darrell, glancing significantly at the renegade.

Ethepeate turned to a youthful warrior, whose head-dress consisted of a single eagle-feather.

"Eagle-feather," he said, "will guard the hunter."

A dark scowl passed over the Frenchman's face.

Morgan saw that the appointment displeased him. As for himself, he was at once favorably impressed with his guard, for he possessed a kindly face.

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE SPRING.

THE remainder of the day Morgan Darrell spent conversing with young Eagle-feather, his guard.

Together they rambled through the village, while the Dutchman remained in the hut, examining its weak points, and to eat and sleep.

Morgan desired to meet Isora at the spring the coming night, but feared that the keen eyes of his guard would frustrate him.

"The Frenchman has an evil eye," he remarked to Eagle-feather, as they stood beneath the boughs of the only tree that grew within the limits of the village.

"Yes," answered the young Erie, with suddenly flashing eyes. "He crossed Eagle-feather's path once, and he has not forgotten it."

Morgan looked at the guard, but did not speak. He had a curiosity to know the cause for the intense hatred existing between the red and the white.

"Many moons ago," continued Eagle-feather, lowering his voice, for he saw the renegade standing in the door of his lodge not a great distance away, "the young men of the Eries were upon a great hunt for wolf-skins. Evil Eye accompanied them. In the great wood we separated and each one went his own way. Eagle-feather was very successful, and had more fresh skins than he could carry. He stopped and hid them, and again stepped upon the trail.

"By and by he turned his feet toward the village of the Eries, between him and which were the hidden skins. As Eagle feather drew nigh his cache, he beheld a form stooping over it. He rushed upon the thief, and lo! it was Evil Eye. Eagle-feather struck him till the blood came, and hurried him off. He hates a thief. But, Eagle-feather dared not accuse him, because he was the companion of Ethepeate.

"Now the white hunter knows why Eagle-feather and Evil Eye hate one another."

A long silence succeeded the Indian's story of a hate, and then the young American, who had been thinking deeply, spoke :

"Would Eagle-feather work against Evil Eye?"

"Yes," said the Indian, quickly.

"The white maiden, whom your people call Soft Eyes, has sent the pale-faced hunter a message. She has said that she would be at the spring to-night. The hunter would see her. He would speak alone with one of his people before he steps upon the trail of death. He wishes Eagle-feather to permit him to meet Soft Eyes at the spring."

The Indian's head dropped upon his bosom, and he evidently thought deeply.

Morgan saw that a great conflict was going on in his mind, and with wildly-throbbing heart and bated breath he awaited its termination.

At last the Erie looked up.

His countenance had undergone a marked change, and Darrell's heart beat with joy.

"Eagle-feather will let the white hunter meet Soft Eyes at the spring," said the young warrior, slowly.

Morgan would have pressed the Erie's hand, had he not seen the baneful eyes of the French renegade fixed upon them.

"Evil Eye sees us," murmured Eagle-feather ; "but he can hear nothing."

"But will he not watch Soft Eyes and keep her in her lodge?" asked our friend, fearing that something at last would baffle him.

"His eyes shall be off of Soft Eyes to-night. Eagle-feather will go to Popinnomah, whose hair is as the snow. Popinnomah is the Great Medicine of the Eries. He is Eagle-feather's friend. He secretly hates Evil Eye, who wants to know about the poisons of the great forests. Eagle-feather can trust him. He will send a secret message to Evil Eye, who will tell him that to-night Popinnomah will tell him about the poisons. Evil Eye will go, and his eyes will be off of the white maiden."

Morgan could not but admire the ready shrewdness of the Indian.

"But will Popinnomah tell the Frenchman about the poisons?" he asked.

"No," said Eagle-feather, smiling. "He will place the juice of a flower to his nostrils, and Evil Eye will sleep."

"Now," resumed the Indian, "the hunter will join his big brother, and Eagle-feather will join him when the sun is out of sight."

They separated, and Darrell entered the hut, and impatiently awaited the coming of Eagle-feather. Gottlieb was asleep on the earth, and Morgan did not disturb him. The poor fellow seemed determined to sleep as much as possible, while he had the opportunity.

As the hunter seated himself upon the ground, his mind became the scene of a mental battle. He half believed that Eagle-feather might betray him—that he was playing him into the hands of his greatest enemy—the renegade. Why should the young Indian befriend him, who had slain several of his tribe, and would have struck him dead had he been one of them?"

At last the hour came, and with it Eagle-feather.

"Evil Eye sleeps on Popinnomah's couch," he whispered, glancing at Gottlieb, "and Soft Eyes and Bright Star have gone to the spring."

Morgan rose to his feet and together they left the hut.

The spring was situated at the base of a hill at the southern limit of the village. Tall elders grew around it, and effectually hid any one who stood within the circle.

The couple encountered few Indians, and but once were they questioned, as to their destination at such an hour.

"The white hunter is going to the spring," said Eagle-feather, and the explanation was satisfactory.

At last they gained the summit of the elevation, and Eagle-feather paused.

"The hunter may go alone to the spring," he said, pointing toward the elders. "Eagle-feather will tarry here. Let his white friend's sentences be brief."

"They shall, noble Eagle-feather," said Morgan, as he, overjoyed, hurried down the declivity.

Presently he paused outside the circle of elders and parted them.

Before him were Isora and the chief's daughter. The former sprung forward and extended her hands.

He caught them and spoke the name her mother gave her.

"Isora!"

She started.

"Isora! You know me! Who sent you?" she cried.

"Isora, have you forgotten me? Have I so changed that you fail to recognize me?"

She stepped nearer, and scrutinized his sunburnt features.

"Morgan Darrell!"

"Yes, Isora."

"And you have come here for me?"

"Yes."

"How knew you that I was here?"

In as few words as possible, Morgan related his adventures since leaving his native city. Then they talked of escape.

"The logs of the strong lodge are green," said Bright Star. "But the bark roof is dry. A sharp knife would, in a short time, free the hunters."

"I have the knife," said Morgan.

"Then let us escape," said Isora. "I want to repose on the bosom of my father. I want to leave the hated presence of my persecutor, and be free again. The sooner we escape, the better. The band that has been sent after your companion, the Wyandot, may return at any hour, and then would come the death-scene."

"Could we not make the attempt to-morrow night?" inquired Morgan.

"I see no hindrance. Eagle-feather will sleep with you. We will give you ropes with which you can bind him, and silence him as you see fit. At a certain hour we will be under the lodge, and watch while you work."

"Your plans are good, Isora," said the hunter, "and I think we will succeed. But, the ropes—the deer-thongs?"

"Bright Star will hide them in the lodge to-morrow, when the white hunter and Eagle-feather are in the village," said the Indian.

"Give them to Gottlieb, my companion."

"Bright Star will obey."

At that moment the hoot of the owl was borne to their ears. Morgan knew that it came from the throat of his guard. His time was up.

"I must go, Isora," he said, reluctantly. "Eagle-feather calls. But will not the renegade watch you to-morrow night?"

"We will manage him—Bright Star and I," she returned, and the hunter's fears were quieted.

Then they separated, and Morgan rejoined his guard.

"To-morrow night," he murmured, "freedom—and Isora!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HUNTED WOLF AGAIN.

THE night that followed close upon the meeting at the spring, as described in the last chapter, found an Indian seated alone in a forest not far from Cuyahoga Falls.

These exceedingly picturesque falls are within the limits of Summit county, Ohio. The savages called them "Coppacaw," which signifies "*shedding tears*."

The lone Indian was Weptonomah.

He was not many miles from the spot where his friends had become captives. He was in the very heart of the country of the Eries; and he surely knew that he would be pursued.

The spot he occupied was quite open, and the moon bathed his sinewy form in light. He was devouring a piece of meat, and his manner indicated that he, just then, did not look for his enemies. But the Eries were very close at hand.

As yet, they had not seen the chief, but suddenly the sound of the breaking of a dry twig assailed the Wyandot's ears. He started, and fixed his eyes upon a long streak of moonlight a short distance from him.

Presently several dark forms flitted over the ground at that spot.

Wondering how they had managed to approach so very near him without being discovered, the Wyandot calmly rose to his feet and tightened his belt.

Instantly the Eries perceived him, and, knowing that further caution was useless, sprung to their feet, and, with terrible yells, rushed forward.

Weptonomah counted them, as they darted forward, and shook his head.

"The Eries are too strong," he muttered. "Weptonomah will run."

Acting immediately upon this determination, he sprung forward, toward the Cuyahoga, the Eries yelling in his rear.

An arrow would have brought him down; but the Eries dared not disobey the parting command of Ethepeate:

"Return with Weptonomah alive," their great sachem had said, "or return with him not at all."

The right bank of the river was about a mile distant, and the Eries hoped to overtake the Wyandot before he could gain it. They knew every fallen tree in the forest, and, without the slightest difficulty, avoided them.

Weptonomah knew nothing of the positions of the logs and patches of briars; but he knew where the Cuyahoga was, and he bent his energies to reach it in advance of his pursuers.

He was successful; but when he paused, death was before as well as behind him.

He stood upon the edge of a precipice, sixty feet below which rushed the river to the lake.

The moonlight which illy penetrated the gorge, threw a dismal light upon the cold waters, and an imperceptible shudder passed over the Indian's frame as he gazed upon them.

The Eries sent forth a yell of triumph when they saw the chief pause upon the rocks, for they thought that sooner than take the fearful leap he would quietly surrender.

But surrender was the last thing that came to Weptonomah's mind.

"Weptonomah is tired," he murmured. "The great river wants him to sleep upon its breast. He is coming. He was about to go and save the hunter and his brother when the Eries broke the stick. Weptonomah's friends must die now."

The chief is sorry. If Okki lets Weptonomah escape now, he will rescue the pale-faces or die. The Hunted Wolf will not be taken alive."

He suddenly turned and faced the Eries. They were rushing upon him, having forgotten that his never-failing rifle was freighted with a death-warrant.

A smile flitted over Weptonomah's features, and the butt of his gun suddenly struck his shoulder. He glanced along the long, glittering barrel, and a report rent the night air.

The foremost Indian threw his hand to his heart, and fell back lifeless.

Then the Wyandot drew the string of Erie scalps from his belt, and, waving it over his head, shouted twice, the war-cry of his nation.

"Ki-o-e-chee! ki-o-e-chee!"

The echo had not died away along the Cuyahoga, when he turned and leaped from the precipice.

Down, down, down—at last the waters closed over him!

The Eries were soon upon the cliff. In awe they gazed over it and shook their heads.

The waters far below rushed gloomily on, as though they had not engulfed the bravest, noblest Indian that ever trod the war-path.

"Weptonomah's on the trail of death," said one of the Eries, who was a chief of no mean distinction. "Braves, pack to your lodges—to see the pale-faces die!"

CHAPTER XIV.

A BLOW FOR FREEDOM.

WHEN Morgan Darrell entered the strong lodge, after the meeting with Isora and Bright Star, he threw himself down beside the Dutchman. His guard, Eagle-feather, had also entered the hut. He sat down upon the ground and silence reigned supreme in the apartment.

One by one the hours wore away, and at last day came.

Morgan's dreams were abruptly broken by the hand of the Erie. He awoke, and started when his eyes fell upon the Indian.

Eagle-feather smiled.

"The hunter dreamed that he was free."

"Yes, Eagle-feather, and when you awakened me, I thought that I was standing upon a hill and looking down upon my native city."

The young chief did not reply, but rose to his feet.

"Eagle-feather will get some venison for the hunter," he said.

The next moment he was gone, and Morgan immediately roused Gottlieb.

In a few moments he communicated to him the events of the preceding evening, and the plans for escape. Gottlieb's heart beat fast as he listened to the latter, and gave Morgan the results of his vigilance.

"Dere," he said, pointing to the north-east corner of the bark roof, "is der weakest p'int. Yesterday I shoost climbed up der logs to it and found dat der bark is a leetle rotten. My knife vent right through it; an' I dinks dat half an hour's work vill let us out."

"I hope so, Gottlieb. We will cut in the corner to-night."

"Vill ve kill der Ingun?"

"No," answered Morgan. "At the proper time I will spring upon him and hold him until you have bound him. I will then gag him, and leave you to watch while I work."

"It is goot," said Gottlieb. "But der guns? I can't leave mitout old King William."

"True, Gottlieb, we should not try to escape without our arms. I am sure Bright Star would take them from the council-house and carry them into the forest."

"I vill see der pooty gal apout it, ven she prings der ropes," said Gottlieb.

At that moment Eagle-feather returned, and further conversation about their plans was suspended.

At the conclusion of the meal, Morgan expressed a desire to walk about the village, and Eagle-feather said that he would accompany him. Together they left the hut, leaving Gottlieb alone.

The strong lodge fronted the wigwam of the father of Bright Star, and in the door of it, that morning, stood the maiden. Her father had already arisen, and sought the lodge of Ethepeate.

A smile parted Bright Star's lips when she saw Morgan and his guard leave the prison.

"The big hunter is alone," she said, inaudibly, "and Bright Star will bear to him the sinews of the deer."

She turned into the lodge, and drew from beneath her couch of beautiful panther-skins two ropes composed of twisted sinews. She thrust them under her embroidered jacket, and stepped to the opposite side of the lodge. There a rough trough rested upon two stones, and in it lay the body of a raccoon which had been roasted the preceding day.

She took the animal from the trough, and placed it upon a piece of bark.

Then she left the wigwam and walked straight toward the strong lodge. Suddenly she paused, and called to a youthful Indian, who with folded arms was watching her.

He advanced with a light step and soon paused before her.

"Bright Star is fairer than the wildwood flowers," he said, gazing into her bright eyes.

"Leaping Panther's words are full of honey," said the girl. "Let him go to Bright Star's lodge ; she would speak with him. She will return when she has taken the meat to the prisoners of her people."

The Indian lover caught her unengaged hand, pressed it to his lips, and hurried toward the wigwam she had just vacated.

Gottlieb's eyes fairly danced, and his lips suddenly grew moist, when he saw Bright Star enter the hut with the roasted raccoon.

"Golly!" he cried, feasting his eyes upon the tempting meat. "Another coon! Vy, my leetle gal, you ish der best ding I knows on. Dat other coon vas cooked tip-top. Say, vere you learn cooking, eh? I shoost love coons, an' I b'lieve I loves you, too. Say, couldn't you go mit us? I'd marry you, an' treat you goot as never vas, if you'd shoost do noding but cook coons. Vat does yer say?"

The Erie beauty smiled.

"Leaping Panther loves Bright Star," she said, her gaze seeking the ground.

"He does, eh? Vell, den, I'll shoost have to give in. I vish you'd bring another coon fur my dinner."

"Leaping Panther remains in the village to-day."

"He's yer coon-killer is he?"

The girl nodded, and drew the sinews from her bosom, and thrust them into Gottlieb's hands.

"Der ropes, py golly!" he exclaimed, as he quickly hid them beneath his hunting-frock.

Then he turned his attention to the coon, and Bright Star quietly took her departure.

A minute had not followed her when the Dutchman looked up.

He sprung to his feet.

"Der guns!" he exclaimed. "I forgot to ask her apout der guns."

He jumped to the door of the hut, and saw the maiden a short distance away.

"Starry!" he shouted, at the top of his voice, "Starry, come pack. I forgets to ask you a question."

Bright Star did not return, but walked leisurely on.

"Vell, I s'pose she couldn't steal 'em anyhow," he soliloquized, returning to his feast. "I shoost tell Morg dat she refused to try it. Ve mought git away mitout 'em, but, den, I hate to leave King William mit der red-skins."

And, to console himself, he turned his attention to the raccoon.

Bright Star found Leaping Panther, her chivalrous red lover, awaiting her in her father's lodge.

She approached him, and threw herself upon her couch at his feet.

For awhile they talked, as lovers will when in each other's company, when Bright Star suddenly changed the conversation.

"Can Leaping Panther disguise himself that Evil Eye would not know him?"

"Yes."

"Would he bind Evil Eye to-night?"

"He would for Bright Star."

"Bright Star and Soft Eyes would go into the woods to-night, and they do not want Evil Eye to follow. They want him bound."

"Leaping Panther will bind him."

"Bright Star is happy. Leaping Panther will conceal himself in Soft Eyes' lodge when night comes. Evil Eye will enter to see if Soft Eyes sleeps. Then Leaping Panther must bind and silence him. When we return from the wood we will free him."

The Indian could not divine what the girls intended to do in the wood at night; but he was too chivalrous to be inquisitive. Therefore, he did not question Bright Star; but again promised to comply with her wishes.

Night came.

It was a dark, cloudy night; but unattended with rain.

Morgan and Gottlieb were waiting for the presence of the two girls on the outside of the hut. Their arrival was to be announced by a predetermined signal.

Eagle-feather was seated a short distance from the hunters, in a thoughtful mood. His head rested upon his breast and he thought of every thing, save the fate in store for him.

While silence was king in the hut, an exciting scene was being enacted in the presence of Isora.

Two forms were almost noiselessly struggling on the ground near her couch.

One was the renegade, and the other an Indian, whose features were obliterated by ocherous clay. The former was beneath the latter, who was attempting to bind him.

A few moments before, La Gorreaux had entered the lodge which adjoined his own, to see if the captive occupied it. The room was wrapped in a semi-gloom, and, not seeing Isora, he called her name. The next moment he found himself hurled to the ground. He struggled; but soon found that his antagonist was the stronger.

At last he submitted, and was bound with sinews. Then a gag was thrust into his mouth, and Leaping Panther darted from the wigwam and sought his own.

Isora almost inaudibly followed the Indian, and, a short distance away, she was joined by Bright Star.

They hurried to the prison and gave the signal. The next instant a blow from Morgan Darrell's clenched hand stretched Eagle-feather upon the ground, and before the chief recovered from the blow he was securely bound and gagged.

The door of the hut was fastened on the outside, and the slender fingers of two girls could never have removed the fastenings. An Indian had accompanied our friends and their guard to the hut, and when they found themselves inside, he secured the door and hung upon it Ethepeate's wampum. This was a custom among the Eries.

"Now watch, Gottlieb," said Morgan, rising, "and I will work."

The logs of which the hut was composed were rough, and the hunter encountered no difficulty in reaching the roof. He as easily supported himself, and drove his knife through the bark. He found at once that Gottlieb had been deceived—that he had mistaken toughness for decay.

But he did not despair—he was working for freedom—life—and he worked hard.

Below him were the two girls, hoping, fearing, praying. They listened to the noise of the knife above, and knew that the daring hunter was succeeding—but oh! how slowly.

An hour waned, and Morgan could have thrust his head through the hole he had made.

Another hour, and—thank God—the work was completed.

"Gottlieb, are you ready?"

"Yaw," answered Gottlieb, springing to his feet and striding to the corner.

Morgan thrust his head and shoulders above the roof, but suddenly paused. The tread of moccasined feet assailed his ears, and sent a nameless chill to his heart.

He was about to warn the girls, when a voice, which sounded like the clang of the infernal doors of doom, paled his cheeks.

"Ha! plotters," cried the voice, as the speaker suddenly sprung forward. "Your accursed accomplice did not do his work well. I freed myself at last, and am here with my braves. The devil will be to pay now."

A piercing shriek rent the midnight air, and Isora staggered

to her feet to fall senseless into the polluted arms of the Frenchman.

Bright Star darted away in the gloom.

"Now, warriors, surround the hut and guard it well," said La Gorreaux. "The wampum of Ethepeate must not be touched. I expect the devil's children have killed Eagle-feather."

A yell of rage broke from the lips of the band, and the hut was at once encompassed.

"All is lost, Gottlieb," groaned Morgan, despairingly, as he slowly and reluctantly descended. "The Frenchman, whom Isora had caused to be bound somewhere, has escaped, and brought his band here. To-morrow I expect to die; but the accursed renegade shall not live to gloat over his triumph. Poor Isora! What will become of her now?"

He sunk back, and hid his face in his hands. He feared not for himself, but for the gentle being in the power of the white fiend.

And Isora? While Morgan was lamenting her fate, the renegade was bearing her in triumph to his lodge.

His face was livid with rage, and his heart the receptacle for dark plans of evil deeds.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM THE HAPPY HUNTING-GROUNDS.

THE renegade soon reached his own lodge, and laid his lovely and unconscious burden upon his couch of dressed bear-skins. Then, with two pieces of red flint, he kindled a fire among a heap of the inner coatings of bark.

The blaze bathed Isora's colorless face in light, and, standing over her, the Frenchman contemplated it.

"I was just in time," he muttered. "Had the painted red devil tied me more securely, they would have escaped. If ever I worked, I did to slip the accursed wet sinews from my limbs. *Le diable!* he tied them to stay. I wonder who he

was? I suppose I will never know. She would not tell *me*. Of course she would not. What will I do to punish her? Ah! I have it. I'll take her into the woods, tie her to a tree, and get my braves to lay on the birches right heavily. I will teach her that she is *mine*. But, Bright Star, her sly, plotting accomplice. Must I inform her father of her conduct? If I do, the old fellow will nearly kill her. And, then, Leaping Panther would get his dander up. He is a double devil when he is mad, and my life would be worthless. No; I will not tell on her."

He paused a moment, and then continued:

"There are the prisoners. I will try and have them tortured to-morrow. If Ethepeate is in a good-humor, the game will go against me; if he is not, they will die at once. The scouts may return to-morrow with Weptonomah."

At this juncture Isora opened her eyes, and saw the repulsive face above her. A slight scream parted her lips when she realized her situation, and with her hands she shut out the sight.

The renegade smiled and stepped back. He drew a bear-skin from beneath a rude stool, and threw it before the door. Then he threw himself upon it, and composed himself to watch his prisoner.

Isora watched him, and, as the fire flickered for the last time, sleep closed her eyes, and the interior of the wigwam was still.

Morning!

With the first flush the renegade rose and hurried to Ethepeate's lodge.

The sachem was already awake, and enjoying his pipe.

"The pale-face is early astir," said the chief, smiling. "What brings him at this hour to the wigwam of Ethepeate? Have the prisoners escaped?"

"No; but they made a hole in the roof last night."

"Ha!"

"And the hunter was almost out."

"But Eagle-feather?"

"Ah, chief, I fear they have killed him. I dared not disturb the wampum."

"Let the pale-face tell Ethepeate all about it," said the sachem, frowning ominously at the probable death of his young brave.

He composed himself to listen, and the wily Frenchman told the story of the stirring deeds of the past night, in a manner calculated to anger the sachem.

But he found himself defeated.

"The white men shall not die till the braves return," he said, firmly. "The pale Erie should punish his prisoner. Ethepeate will go and see if Eagle-feather is alive."

He rose and went toward the lodge wherein our friends were confined. He tore the wampum from the door and unfastened it.

"Eagle-feather!" he shouted.

The young chief stepped out.

Ethepeate and Louis La Gorreau were astonished.

"The hunters tried to escape last night," said the guard. "They tied Eagle-feather and put a stick in his mouth. This morning they released him. Eagle-feather is glad that they did not send him on the trail of death."

"Does he still wish to guard the hunter?"

"Yes," answered the chief.

"Then guard him, for he is a serpent. Pale Erie, call off your braves. The roof shall be mended."

With this, and not having spoken to his prisoners, the sachem turned, and the Frenchman called off his guarding band.

Suddenly a shout came from the northern limit of the village. The scouts had returned.

Instantly they were surrounded, and the story of the hunt for the Wyandot was soon told. He was dead, they said, with one accord, for the dark waters of the Cuyahoga had closed over him forever.

"When the sun has rose and set three times, the white men shall burn," said Ethepeate, after having listened to the report of the leader of the scouts.

"Why not let them burn to-day?" said the renegade, touching the chief's shoulder.

Ethepeate turned with flashing eyes upon him.

"Does the pale Erie seek to dictate for Ethepeate?" he

cried. "His sachem has spoken. When the sun has rose and set three times, the hunters shall die."

The Frenchman quailed beneath the fierce look of the angry chief, and quickly slunk away to his lodge.

"Let some Erie tell the prisoners their doom," he continued, turning to his warriors. "They leave not the strong lodge till they go to the torture."

A young brave left the group and communicated to our friends the result of the hunt for Weptonomah, and Ethepeate's decision.

In silence Morgan wept for the fate of the brave Wyandot, and felt that he and his companion would soon follow him.

Weptonomah perished by water; they should die by fire.

In a previous chapter we mentioned the sole tree which grew within the limits of the Erie village. It was a wide-spreading oak, in whose majestic foliage the feathered inhabitants of the air builded nests.

It was the night preceding the day of the hunter's doom, that a grotesque object stood beneath the boughs of this tree.

The rays of a full moon fell directly upon the form, which we will attempt to describe.

It was quite six feet in height, and bore some resemblance to a human being—but such a being! The face wore a deathly hue, and the eyes seemed to peer forth from the deepest recesses of their sockets. A long robe of white fox-skins was thrown over the shoulders, and touched the ground behind the strange being. The hair was long and white, and upon the head was a cap surmounted by two long horns. From the breech-cloth to the feet the limbs were devoid of clothing; but were ornamented with strange designs, such as rings, triads, cones, and the heads of animals. The neck was encircled by a cord, upon which were strung beads of the white crane. Upon the bare breast rested innumerable claws of bears, and several pieces of wampum. One of the hands clutched the handle of a knife, whose blade was very narrow and about two feet in length. Such a knife had never been seen in an Erie's hand.

For an hour this terrible-looking being did not stir a muscle.

The eyes were fixed upon the lodge of Ethepeate, which was right in front of him.

Suddenly the rumble of distant thunder was heard. The sound came nearer, and presently roused the Eries from slumber.

They sprung from their couches, and looked up at the sky.

From horizon to horizon not a cloud was visible. Many doubted the evidence of their senses, and turned into their lodges again.

Not so Ethepeate. He was superstitious, extremely so, and believed that the Manitou had spoken. Suddenly he descried the object beneath the oak, and bounded toward it.

Many Indians followed his example. The Frenchman was not far behind them.

The form did not move; but held the long knife before his face.

"It is a messenger from the Manitou," cried Ethepeate. "Warriors, down!"

His command was instantly obeyed, for the warriors were as superstitious as their chief. Even the renegade fell upon his knees; he did not dare to disobey Ethepeate.

"Let the spirit speak," said the sachem, in a trembling voice.

Then, as from the highest branches of the giant oak, came a low, sepulchral voice to their ears.

"Great is Ethepeate, the sachem of the Eries. To his people the Manitou sends a spirit from the happy hunting-grounds. He sends the spirit, clothed in flesh, of the mighty Clear Sky, who lived before Ethepeate was a pappoose. The Manitou sent the thunder to tell the Eries that Clear Sky has come to talk to them. He would speak about the prisoners of the Eries. Weptonomah has reached the *desolate* hunting-grounds, and his friends must follow him. Let the Eries return to their lodges and sleep. Clear Sky will meet them to-morrow in their council-house, when they shall hear the decree of the Great Spirit. Go; it is the Manitou that speaks."

The voice died away far toward the starlit domes, and, in silence and awe, the Eries rose and sought their lodges.

The "messenger from the Jai Manitou" folded his arms, and leaned against the tree.

"It is some crazy Indian," muttered the renegade, as he strode away, "and nothing else. And he will try and get the hunters in his power. But he shall not! I will be present in the morning, and will try and overcome Ethepeate and the warriors' superstition. Thus far they have believed that the maniac—the voice-thrower—is a spirit. Curse Ethepeate's superstition! If I can not overcome it by the force of argument, *I will show him that the maniac is not a spirit by killing him in the presence of the council.*"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DECREE OF THE GREAT SPIRIT.

ETHEPATE, the great king of the Eries, did not close his eyes the remainder of the night. He lay upon his couch thinking of the messenger of the Great Spirit, and wondering what he would communicate at the council-house.

That he was the spirit of Clear Sky, the chief did not doubt, for his sire had told him, long years ago, about that mighty Erie. Clear Sky died a natural death, and in the midst of his people, to whom he prophesied he would come again with a message from the Great Spirit.

Now was not the prophecy fulfilled? Had not Clear Sky come with the divine message?

To these questions Ethepeate gave a decided mental affirmative answer, and he resolved to obey the commands of the ruler of the happy hunting-grounds.

By and by daylight came, and the sachem cast his eyes toward the tree.

But the messenger was gone!

"Perhaps he has found his way to the council-house," was the mental suggestion, and the chief stepped to the rear of his lodge, from which spot a good view of the structure was obtainable.

A moment's view satisfied Ethepeate, for the spirit stood against the center-pole. He was the sole occupant of the council-house, and for awhile the Erie gazed with awe upon the grotesque form.

"But Ethepeate must be stirring," he suddenly muttered. "The spirit is waiting, and it will not do to trifle with the Manitou."

He turned on his heel and strode to the center of the great square of the village. Reaching it, he shouted the rallying-cry, and was almost instantly surrounded by his warriors.

"To the council-house, braves of the Erie nation," he commanded, leading the way.

They obeyed with alacrity, for they were eager to listen to the decree of the Great Spirit.

Silently and slowly they filed into the council-house, and occupied their accustomed respective places on the ground.

The messenger did not seem to be aware of the presence of the Indians, for he gazed upward, and his lips moved as though in prayer to one unseen.

Presently the renegade—who had been detained by hunting a hag to guard his beautiful prisoner—arrived, and took his place in the circle. He confronted the strange being, and watched him scrutinizingly.

Ethepeate did not disturb the spirit, while his eyes were turned heavenward; but waited till his look sought the warriors in the circle.

"The Eries are prepared to listen to the words of the Great Spirit," he said, fixing his eyes upon the wild being. "We are all here save Eagle-feather, who guards the pale-faced prisoners."

Then followed a minute's silence, after which a voice which seemed to emanate from the calm blue far above the council-house, fell like the strains of Eolian music upon the senses.

"The Great Spirit is glad to see the Eries with open ears. He says that not one of them shall dwell in the desolate hunting-grounds. He sent Clear Sky among them to pronounce the doom of the white prisoners. He can not speak further till they stand before him."

The warriors strangely regarded the speaker at this announcement, and then looked at Ethepeate. The chief had arisen.

"Little Wolf will conduct them hither," he said, and resumed his seat.

An Indian of small stature left the circle, and ran toward the strong lodge.

Following upon the Erie's departure, the Frenchman, as if acting under a sudden impulse, rose to his feet; but quickly resumed his seat, without having uttered a word.

"Not just yet," he muttered. "I will wait and see what he wants to do with them."

Presently Little Wolf was seen returning with our two friends and the guard.

Upon being released, the hunters had been informed that a spirit had arrived the preceding night from the happy hunting-grounds, and that he bore a decree from the Great Spirit concerning them. Eagle-feather placed implicit faith in the news; but our friends did not know how to regard it.

"I shoost bet he's some crazy Ingún," said Gottlieb, "vot has come to kill us some horrible way. He dinks dat he's de killin' angel of Gott."

"Quite probable, Gottlieb," answered Morgan, upon whom the Dutchman's words had suddenly fastened themselves. "At any rate, we shall soon see what he is." Then he added, in an undertone, which reached no ears but his own: "It may be—no, it is not he, for he died in the presence of twenty Eries."

He was thinking about Weptonomah.

At length they reached the council-house, and, from a guarded spot, beheld the spirit of the once mighty Clear Sky.

"Vat did I say?" whispered Gottlieb. "He is as crazy as a loon."

Morgan did not reply, but continued to gaze upon the strange person. He thought the nether limbs were shaped like Weptonomah's; but the Wyandot's hair was black, not white, like the spirit's.

When the eyes of the messenger had rested a moment upon the wondering prisoners, the voice in the air was heard again.

"The Great Spirit smiles, for the white prisoners are in the council-house. Clear Sky is his executioner, and he sent him among the Eries to slay the prisoners with the magic knife. This is what the voice of the great Ka Jai Manitou said: 'Clear Sky, go to the village of the Eries and demand the white prisoners of my beloved people. Conduct them

into the wood when the owl hoots, and slay them with the magic knife. If an Erie followeth thee I will slay him with quenchless fire. If the Eries willingly give up the pale-faces, they shall never want for meat; if they refuse, I shall drive the animals of the woods into the country of their enemies.' Thus spake the Great Spirit. What say the Eries?"

Ethepeate was rising to reply, when the Frenchman sprung to his feet. He had seen that the chief intended to surrender the prisoners.

"Will Ethepeate believe this nonsense?" he demanded, quivering, aspen-like, with rage. "The Great Spirit has sent no messenger among us. He wants the pale hounds to die by fire in our village. There stands a maniac, who thinks he is a messenger from the Manitou. The Manitou sends messengers whose heads are not cracked. That is a crazy devil, who would cheat us out of our prisoners. He can throw his voice wherever he desires, and to-day he throws it into the air. He is a deceiver—a mad deceiver. Will the Eries believe him?"

Not a warrior spoke, and even the lips of Ethepeate were sealed. They feared that the vengeance of the Great Spirit would fall upon the Frenchman, for so bitterly denouncing his messenger.

"The pale-face is mad," said the airy voice. "He must not curse the Great Spirit, or a thunderbolt from the fiery lodge will touch him."

The renegade laughed scornfully.

"Does Ethepeate believe that the spirit of Clear Sky speaks?" he cried, rising and grasping his knife.

"Yes, and Ethepeate is going to obey," was the unexpected reply.

"Then I will show Ethepeate and his warriors that it is not a spirit," cried La Gorreaux, as, with uplifted knife, he sprung toward the messenger.

But he did not reach his object.

A single warrior rose to his feet, and a tomahawk left his hand. It struck the renegade on the temple, and he fell forward on his face.

Immediately the air was laden with voices.

"Great is Leaping Panther," they cried. "He has saved

the messenger of the Manitou. His days shall never end. Great, great is Leaping Panther!"

Then the voices ceased, and another, that seemed to come from the earth at the feet of the spirit, said :

"Let Ethepeate speak. Shall the decree of the Great Spirit be obeyed?"

"Yes," answered the sachem, boldly. "What say my warriors?"

"Yes, yes," was the unanimous answer.

"Then, to-night, Clear Sky will conduct the pale-faces into the great forest, and slay them with the knife. Pale-faces, prepare for the ordeal," and he looked at our friends.

In those dark, sunken orbs, Morgan fancied he saw a well-known gleam.

But he did not hope.

"Hark! The Spirit is speaking with Clear Sky! He says something about Soft Eyes. Clear Sky must retire to hear the whole communication of Manitou. He wants, for awhile, Ethepeate's lodge.

"He shall have it."

"To-night," the voice said again, "let the prisoners be brought to the lone tree. There Clear Sky will meet them."

The spirit turned, and walked slowly toward Ethepeate's lodge.

The council immediately broke up, and our friends were reconducted to their prison.

Having recovered, the renegade rose to his feet, and, cursing Ethepeate's superstition, Leaping Panther and the spirit sought his wigwam.

"We are in a madman's power, Gottlieb," whispered Morgan in the ears of his companion.

"Yaw; but it ish better to die py his hand den at der stake," consoled the Dutchman. "I tell ye vat, Morg," brightening up, "we may vip 'im ven we git inter der woods, an' git away."

"He will bind us, of course," said Morgan. "Nothing is left for us but to die."

Gottlieb did not reply, for his thoughts reverted to the home on the Rhine, and, for the first time in his life, he thought seriously of death.

CHAPTER XVII.

ANOTHER DECREE FROM SPIRIT-LAND.

IT was eight o'clock in the morning when the council broke up, and the spirit remained in Ethepeate's lodge until twelve.

Then he slowly rose from the rich couch upon which he had reclined, and slept, and stood in the entrance. Under the lone tree stood the sachem, looking straight at him.

The spirit beckoned to the chief, who quickly approached.

"Let Ethepeate stand and hearken to another decree from spirit-land," said the mysterious voice, when the sachem was within ten feet from the spirit.

Ethepeate obeyed with reverence, and indicated by a sign that he was listening.

"The Great Spirit speaks through his great executioner," said the voice, "and this is what he says: 'Clear Sky, the white prisoner of the pale Erie must die. The magic knife must let out her blood. Therefore, take her into the wood to-night with the white men and slay her. If the pale Erie demurs, let my beloved Ethepeate bind him for many hours—till the spirits of the sacrificed pale-faces have reached the flowerless land. When they have reached it, Clear Sky will return to tell the Eries.' Thus speaks the Manitou. What says Ethepeate?"

"The Great Spirit shall be obeyed," replied the sachem, as the last sound of the voice seemed to penetrate the blue far above. "Soft Eyes will be under the lone tree to-night. What will the signal be?"

"When the white owl of the Great Spirit hoots three times in the lone tree, let the three victims be conducted to it. Thus speaks Okki. Leaping Panther would approach Ethepeate," suddenly resumed the voice, and the spirit looked beyond the sachem.

Ethepeate turned, and beheld Leaping Panther standing some distance away, irresolute. That he had something to communicate was plain; but he was afraid to stand in the immediate presence of the living dead unbidden.

"Can Leaping Panther approach?" asked Ethepeate.

"Yes."

The chief beckoned to the young warrior, who quickly approached.

"What would Leaping Panther with Ethepeate?"

"Evil Eye is mad," said the warrior. "He has taken Soft Eyes into the wood to beat her with sticks. His braves are with him."

Ethepeate was about to return some kind of a reply, when the spirit stepped forward.

"Soft Eyes is the pale Erie's no longer," said the voice, emanating from the sky. "She is the Great Spirit's. He back must not be bruised. Hark! Okki speaks directly to Ethepeate. 'Ethepeate,' the voice was harsh like a battle command, 'take twenty warriors and tear Soft Eyes from the tree. Clear Sky will accompany thee.'"

Feeling highly honored by being directly addressed by the Great Spirit, Ethepeate turned to obey with alacrity the summons.

In a very short time the warriors were present, and they set out for the wood. The spirit walked at the side of the sachem.

Let us precede their arrival.

To a small tree, about one foot through, a few feet beyond the edge of the forest, was bound a young girl.

The absence of clothing from the waist to the neck, displayed the whitest, fairest skin that ever human eye gazed upon.

Not a blemish marred the glossy surface, and it seemed desecration to cut it with a stick.

Her face was pressed against the tree, and not a murmur escaped her ashen lips.

Near her, and feasting their sensual eyes upon her unadorned beauty, stood Louis La Gorreaux and two Indians. Further into the wood might have been seen a dozen Indians, cutting limbs from the trees and trimming them.

This white demon of a Frenchman had a band upon which he could rely. It was given him by Ethepeate some years prior to the opening of our romance, and he found it composed of the lees of the nation.

The reader will remember, that when he carried Isora to his lodge after frustrating our friends' escape, he swore that he would whip her.

During the interval between the arrival of the spirit and the morning council, his mind had been engrossed with other things, and he had temporarily forgotten his oath.

When he left the council-house, bleeding from Leaping Panther's tomahawk, he wanted a victim upon whom to wreak the vengeance that was consuming his heart. Suddenly he thought of Isora, and consequently his oath. Yes, he would whip her!

To this fiendish end he marshaled his warriors, and, turning a deaf ear to the pleadings of the poor girl, he carried her into the wood.

His movements were watched by Bright Star, who informed her lover. He, in turn, communicated with Ethepeate, as the reader has seen.

At last the Indians returned from the interior of the wood, loaded with switches. They threw them upon the ground before the renegade. He stooped and selected twelve of the stoutest, which he placed in the hands of the most Herculean savage of his band.

"Now, Silver Foot," he cried, stepping back, "let her have it. Lay on heavily. I'll teach her how to assist white dogs to escape."

The Indian stepped nearer to the maiden, and raised the bunch of switches.

"Strike!" yelled the renegade.

The demon obeyed his master, and the switches fell heavily on Isora's shoulders. Her white flesh blushed crimson, and an audible groan escaped.

"Good! I'll make her yell directly!" cried the Frenchman, laughing fiendishly. "Another good one, Silver Foot."

The whips were again raised; but the savage never struck again. The whiz of a barbed arrow fell upon the brute's ears, and Silver Foot went to the earth with an arrow half-hidden in his breast.

Consternation seized the remainder of the band, and with yells they fled, leaving La Gorreaux alone. He gazed toward the edge of the wood, and beheld Ethepeate, his warriors and

the spirit approaching. A bow without an arrow was in Leaping Panther's hands.

He was baffled.

"They will tie me up and whip me if I remain," he muttered. "Leaping Panther will do the whipping, too. I will follow my warriors; but will baffle them yet."

He fled as though the Furies were howling upon his track.

A few moments later Isora was released, and told of the fate that awaited her in the same forest that night.

"Thank God!" she fervently ejaculated. "At last I am free from him—free forever."

"Yes," said the mysterious voice, "Soft Eyes will soon be with the Great Spirit."

"Which," she added, "is my God?"

They all returned to the village, and Leaping Panther guarded the door of Isora's lodge. The Great Spirit had said that the renegade should speak to her no more.

La Gorreux was in his own lodge. He did not know that his prisoner was to be sacrificed; and he did not care to show himself to Ethepeate until the coming night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A STARTLING METAMORPHOSIS.

THE thoughts that busied the brains of the doomed the remainder of the day were sober and serious.

That they would be sacrificed to the fury of a maniac they did not allow themselves to doubt; but they resolved to perish as calmly as possible under the circumstances.

Morgan thought of Isora.

When he was gone there would be no human hand outstretched to rescue her from a demon's power, as he had outstretched his. From his guard he learned that the renegade had not, as yet, punished his fair prisoner for attempting to escape; but, of course, the affair in the woods, related in our last chapter, had not reached Eagle-feather's ears.

He could only hope that the Frenchman would forget the circumstances, and not punish one powerless to resist.

But night came to the doomed trio, at last, and the hunter's ears were strained to catch the footfall of the guards.

Suddenly a familiar noise saluted his ears, and seemed to tell him that the fatal hour had come.

"To-whoo, to-whoo, to-who-oo-o."

Eagle-feather sprung to his feet.

"The bird of darkness tells the hunters that they must soon step upon the trail of death, goaded by the knife of Clear Sky. The guards will be here presently."

The chief's lips were still trembling with the last words, when the footsteps of a squad of Eries fell upon their ears.

The following minute the door was opened, and the trio stepped forth. Eagle-feather took his place among the Indians, and the lone tree was shortly reached.

There, to their great surprise and astonishment, the hunters encountered Isora.

"Isora!" cried Morgan, catching up her hand before he could be prevented. "Isora, why are *you* here?"

"I die with you," she answered, calmly.

"By the knife of the mad Indian?"

"Yes. He says he has received another communication from the land of spirits, to the effect that I, too, should be sacrificed. I want to be free from my persecutor, and death—that blessed sleep—will free me forever."

At that moment the voice of the renegade was heard. He had just reached the spot.

"What means this?" he cried, pointing at Isora, whose face wore a triumphant smile. "Why is *she* here? She is mine. I risked my life to get her, and I will keep her, or lose it."

His knife flew from his belt, and he darted toward the maiden, who instinctively shrunk from him.

"Mine, she shall be, by heaven and earth!"

There was a predetermined signal—the uplifting of a finger from Ethepeate, and Leaping Panther, the bravest of his tribe, sprung upon the Frenchman.

In a moment the villain was bound, and thrown to one side like a worthless piece of wood. He could not curb his

rage, and cursed till froth ran from his mouth. But, he was powerless to release himself, and his band dared not lend a helping hand.

At length the voice of the Great Spirit came from the highest bough of the tree

"Let the doomed be bound," it said, "and Clear Sky will take them into the wood and slay them."

From beneath his white robe the spirit drew a long rope of sinews and handed it to Ethepeate. The chief stepped forward and bound Morgan's wrists together. Then he bound Gottlieb with the same rope, and lastly Isora was served in a like manner.

Completing his work he stepped back, and handed the remaining end of the rope to the spirit.

"All is ready," said the voice. "Soon the white people will be with the Great Spirit. Have the arms of the hunters been taken to the tree as Clear Sky has commanded?"

"Yes," answered Ethepeate, "Little Mink bore them to the riven tree."

"I see through the devil's scheme now," cried the renegade, striving to rise. "It is a plan to rescue the white dogs. That Indian is not crazy, nor is he a spirit. He is—"

Leaping Panther's tomahawk knocked him senseless
The spirit smiled approvingly.

"Clear Sky must go. Let the Eries cover their faces."

Immediately each Indian covered his face with his hands, and the spirit strode toward the forest. He firmly held the rope that secured his victims, who, in silence, followed him.

It was a beautiful night to die. The heavens were cloudless, and not a star seemed wanting therein. The milky way was uncommonly magnificent, and Morgan thought that Polaris never shone brighter before.

Scarce a word passed between the spirit's prisoners during the journey to the spot of execution. It proved to be beneath the boughs of a kingly beech. The spirit looked cautiously in every direction, and then spoke.

The voice did not come from the air or ground but from his throat!

"Are the white people prepared to die?"

Each returned an affirmative answer, and the terrible knife was raised.

Whose blood would it first drink? It was a terrible moment!

Suddenly, as quickly as it had been raised, it descended, and — severed the cord that bound Morgan!

Another stroke, and Isora and Gottlieb were free.

Their surprise was so great that they could not express it in language.

A greater awaited them.

Immediately after the second stroke the hands of the spirit flew to his head, and the hideous horned cap rolled to the ground, to be followed by the long white hair and robe of fox-skins!

Weptonomah stood before them!

“Weptonomah!” cried Morgan, scarce crediting his vision.

“Yaw, it ish Vepty, py tam!” cried Gottlieb, catching up the chief’s hands.

Isora looked on, lost in joyous bewilderment.

“Yes,” said the Indian, “the Hunted Wolf lives. He will save the pale-faces. Let them be silent and follow him.”

He stooped, picked up his disguises, and walked rapidly into the somber shadows of the wood.

Soon he paused beside an oak which the lightning had blasted, and pointed to the hunters’ guns. Gottlieb sprung forward, and clasped his beloved blunderbuss to his joyful heart.

“Silence, and a long journey,” said the chief, in a monotone. “The Eries may discover what Weptonomah has done.”

A minute later, with the chief for a guide, our friends were threading the intricate mazes of the forests. Morgan held Isora’s hand, and assured her that they would escape.

“The Wyandot is a mystery,” he whispered. “How he escaped from the Cuyahoga, and procured his strange disguise, will not cease to puzzle me till he explains.”

“In what direction are we moving, Morgan?”

“Toward the north, Isora, and consequently toward Lake Erie, which we will doubtless reach at dawn”

“Do you think our escape has not been discovered?”

"I do not think it has. Every Erie was in the village when we left. They fear the vengeance of their Great Spirit too much to disobey his supposed commands. Rest assured, Isora, that we have not been watched."

Isora was reassured, and on, on through the wood they went.

When Aurora rose from her dewy couch in the east, they stood upon the southern shore of Lake Erie. About a quarter of a mile from them lay a wooded island.

"The Eries have not discovered Weptonomah's game," said the chief. "We will rest till night comes again. We will swim to the island."

In a short time they were in the water, Isora protected by Morgan, and the island was safely reached.

In the center of it a fire was built, and our fugitives sat around it to dry their garments, and partake of a frugal meal, consisting of a quantity of pemmican.

"If the pale-faces will listen," said the Wyandot, "Weptonomah will tell a story."

Morgan knew that the chief was going to speak of his adventures during the present week, and bade him proceed.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MAD MEDICINE OF THE ANDASTES.

WEPTONOMAH'S narrative held our friends spell-bound while he was relating it; and the figurative language in which a great portion of it was clothed, compels us, that the reader may fully understand it, to relate it in our own words.

Luckily for the chief, his feet struck the gloomy water of the Cuyahoga first, and he went under like a stone.

The water was very deep, but he soon rose to the surface, in the deep shade of the high bank upon which the Eries stood.

Recovering from his daring feat in a very short space of time, he swam to the foot of the cliff, where he remained

until he heard the Indians, far above him, take their departure.

For a long time he searched in vain for a place where he could ascend the cliffs; but at last his toil was rewarded. There was a spot where some convulsion of nature had rent the cliffs, and produced a rough stairway.

The chief greeted his discovery with a whispered shout, and was soon ascending the gloomy place. The ascent proved more difficult than he had anticipated, for great numbers of the rocks were loose, and consequently very dangerous. But, he did not despair, and it was near dawn when he stood upon the very spot he had occupied once before, that night.

Climbing the dangerous natural stairs had completely exhausted him, and, knowing that the Eries believed him dead, and therefore would not return to look for him, he threw himself upon the ground and soon fell into a sound sleep.

Waking with the dawn of day, he ate some pemican, a quantity of which food the red-man is never without, and set out for the village of the Eries.

It was his unalterable determination to rescue the two hunters, and Isora, did she prove to be the renegade's captive.

He expected to accomplish his work by stealth, and he formed his plans as he threaded the great, pathless woods.

The sun had nearly reached the meridian, when he came suddenly upon a sight which made him recoil.

At the foot of a tree lay an Indian, old and dying. His hair rivaled the spotless hue of the undriven snow, and in his eyes burned, with a bright flame, the torch of insanity. His body was covered with strange devices, done by the contents of his beaded paint-sack. He wore nothing but a robe, composed of many white fox-skins, and a hairy head-ornament, which was surmounted by a pair of horns. A long-bladed knife lay at his side.

The first sight of the strange being, as we have said, startled Weptonomah, but he quickly recovered himself and stepped forward.

He knew who lay before him, for he had heard of him among his own people. They called him Eriga, the Mad Medicine of the Andastes.

For several years the old man had wandered about the

great lakes in a state of insanity. He believed that the Great Spirit had commissioned him to find a certain flower, which would cause him sleep, in which state he would be borne to the happy hunting-grounds.

A firm conviction in this strange belief hurled Eriga's reason from its throne, and he left his people to hunt the somnolent flower.

He was never seen resting, and day and night he wandered through the forests and upon the shores of Lakes Huron, Michigan, Erie and Ontario. He never got so far north as Lake Superior.

His tribe, the Andastes, was a Huron tribe, more formidable than the Eries, and was located on the head-waters of the Ohio. For bravery they were widely and favorably known, and it is a historical fact that for twenty years they sustained a war against the invincible five nations of New York.

But the last hour of the Mad Medicine had come. For days he had lain where Weptonomah encountered him, without a drop of water to quench his raging thirst. In consequence of this his tongue had swollen and burst. He could not speak, and he was too weak to rise. He did not seem to notice that one of his own race stood before him.

Weptonomah folded his arms and watched the approach of death. In a short time the monster came, and the somnolent flower-hunter was with the Great Spirit.

With the flight of the spirit an idea entered the Wyandot's mind.

He stripped the white robe from the dead, and likewise the horned cap. Then he scalped the Mad Medicine, and clapped the bloody object upon his own head. It fitted to a nicety.

His next movement was to empty the paint-bag of the dead. Then he seated himself, and painted his own body as the Andastes' was. His work was not completed till the arrival of night, when he covered the dead with leaves, and, taking the robe, scalp, cap and knife, resumed his journey.

The next day he reached the wood near the Erie village, and in its darkest recesses he clothed himself in the singular habiliments of the dead medicine. With paint, and a clear

spring for a mirror, he caused his eyes to appear deeply sunken, and gave his face the paleness of a corpse.

He knew that the Eries would recognize his natural voice, therefore he at once decided to use his ventriloquial powers. He was a splendid ventriloquist, and did not fear the result of his daring schemes.

Night came, and he entered the village, and paused beneath the boughs of the lone tree.

What followed is well known to our readers, and it is not necessary to restate it.

“We will leave the island to-night, you say, chief?” said Morgan, when Weptonomah had concluded his narrative.

“Yes. We will travel along the water, and pierce the great wood south of the country of the Five Nations. Weptonomah knows the path, and he will lead the pale-faces to the great city.”

The chief suddenly rose and ran toward the southern boundary of the island—or, more comprehensively speaking, the place where they had landed.

All at once he sprung behind a tree and looked toward the opposite shore.

It was lined with a hundred Eries!

Conspicuous among them was the renegade, pointing excitedly toward the island.

Weptonomah returned to our friends.

“The Eries line the shore of the great water,” he said.

Morgan and Gottlieb sprung to their feet.

“The maiden will stay here,” said Weptonomah, addressing Isora. “The Eries will never reach her.”

Isora smiled and saw them depart.

“White hunters, Weptonomah will tell *you* the truth,” whispered the chief, as they hurried toward the confines of the island. “The Eries far outnumber us. They can swim out into the great lake, and we can not kill all of them. But we will fight to the last for the white girl with the soft eyes.”

“Yes,” returned Morgan. “Over my corpse will they get her, if they get her at all.”

“And over Weptonomah’s, too.”

"Yaw, an' Gottlieb's too, py tam! King William's gun ish full of slugs, an' ven she goes off, look out."

They had reached the confines of the island now, and, from behind trees, were watching the Eries.

CHAPTER XX.

WHITE, RED AND RED.

PERHAPS we could no better begin this chapter than by explaining how the Eries came to reach the lake so soon in the wake of the fugitives.

Weptonomah thought that no person save the three late prisoners witnessed his metamorphosis in the forest.

He was mistaken, however, as the sudden appearance of the Eries proved.

In the Erie village was an idiotic boy, about sixteen years of age. Reason had never smiled on him, and consequently he was counted a nobody by his more intelligent people.

Upon the night of sacrifice the idiot was wandering in the forest. Suddenly he saw four figures beneath a tree. He watched them, and saw one, whom he thought a devil, suddenly change into an Indian. Then they hurried off and were lost to the sight.

He did not directly return to the village and report what he had witnessed; but strolled through the wood an hour longer.

He had scarcely crossed the bounds of the village when he was surrounded by a score of Indians, who had been waiting for the return of the spirit.

"Where has Hollow Head been?" demanded a dozen, simultaneously.

"Where the trees grow thickest."

"And what did he see where the trees grow thickest?"

"He saw four devils, and one had horns on his head. Ha ha! ha! he! he! he!" And the idiot danced and clapped his hands.

"Is that all?"

"No. The devil with horns changed himself into an Indian, and they all ran away. That is what Hollow Head saw. Ha! ha! ha! he! he! he!"

The Indians looked into each other's faces, and soon Ethepeate was the astonished recipient of the idiot's story. He was standing near the lone tree, conversing with Eagle-feather. The renegade still lay upon the ground, bound.

"I knew it!" cried the Frenchman, triumphantly. "I told you it was a deception; but you laughed at me. The 'spirit' was Weptonomah!"

"It must have been," said the sachem, slowly, proving that he had fathomed every thing connected with the 'spirit.'

"It was he, as surely as I live," reiterated La Gorreaux. "He dared not speak in his natural voice, for he knew that we would recognize it. He can throw his voice, and throw it admirably, too."

Flames seemed to dart from Ethepeate's eyes, and the next second the renegade's bonds were severed.

"Pale Erie, Leaping Panther, Eagle-feather, Little Mink, summon your warriors and step at once upon the trail," cried the sachem, thinking only of vengeance. "Bring me the scalps of the three dogs, or return to your village disgraced—fit only to be squaws."

The Indians immediately withdrew, and left Ethepeate alone.

Presently four rallying-cries rent the night-air, and the warriors joined their respective leaders.

The trail was easily found, and, in the favoring moonlight, followed without much difficulty. It ended abruptly at the edge of the water of the lake; and the pursuers knew that the fugitives were on the island.

For near an hour after the three hunters had reached the spot where we left them at the termination of the last chapter, the Eries made no attempts to reach them.

They contented themselves with examining the island, and consultations.

Our friends could see that the Eries were calm and collected, while the renegade was greatly excited.

"The Eries do not want to attack till night comes," said Weptonomah, who was narrowly watching the proceedings on shore. "Evil Eye does not want to delay the attack. Weptonomah hopes he will prevail, for a night attack would be his death, and the pale-faces' too."

Presently the council broke up, with no very satisfactory results.

A few moments elapsed, when another — the ninth-council was held, in which Little Mink went over to the renegade. But the other chiefs remained firm, and succeeding consultations proved abortive for the plans of the Frenchman.

"They must attack us before night," suddenly cried Weptonomah, "and there is one way to make them do it."

"How, chief?"

"By killing Evil Eye. It will exasperate his band, and they will compel the rest to attack."

"Do you really think it, chief?"

"Weptonomah is certain of it. When the white hunter told Weptonomah his story on the banks of the short river, a long time ago, Weptonomah said that the scalp of Evil Eye should hang at his belt. It never may; but Weptonomah at least can kill him."

As the Wyandot finished, he leveled his rifle at La Gorreaux, who, with folded arms, was looking directly toward them.

Morgan and Gottlieb fixed their eyes upon the shore, to note the effect of Weptonomah's shot.

For a moment the dark hawk eye of the Hunted Wolf glanced along the barrel, and then the bullet sped from the groove.

A shriek on the shore followed the report, and backward fell Louis La Gorreaux, with a bullet in his brain.

The renegade's life of crime had suddenly terminated!

The shot brought the desired result, and a shower of arrows fell at the feet of our heroes.

Weptonomah smiled.

"They will attack us now," he said, as he proceeded to reload.

Suddenly Morgan noticed strange actions on the part of

their enemies. They had turned with drawn bow-strings, as if to meet an attack in the rear.

"Look, chief!" he cried. "What does that mean?"

The Wyandot looked, as directed, and a shout parted his lips.

"The Mohawks have attacked the Eries!" he cried, "and if Weptonomah helps them, they will forget that he is a hunted wolf. Let the white hunters watch Soft Eyes. Weptonomah is going to help the Mohawks, and they will not harm him."

"Then go, and may God grant that it be as you have said," fervently responded Morgan; and the next minute the Wyandot was battling with the waves.

He reached the shore unobserved by a single Erie, and with the terrible knife of the dead Mad Medicine of the Andastes, he plunged into the heart of the conflict.

The Mohawks saw that he smote their enemies, and welcomed him with shouts.

The battle was over, and Weptonomah had contributed materially to the success of the Mohawks. But three Eries escaped to bear the terrible tidings of defeat and death to their village. Two of the number, strange to say, proved to be Leaping Panther and Eagle-feather.

"Whence came Weptonomah, the Hunted Wolf of the Wyandots?" demanded Tarangala, who led the Mohawks.

"From the island."

"What was he doing there?"

Then the Wyandot related what is already known to the reader—the story contained in the preceding pages.

In conclusion, he asked that he might be permitted to conduct his white friends through the country of the Five Nations, without the fear of being molested.

"When Weptonomah has conducted his friends through the forests, will he return and become a Mohawk?" asked Tarangala, before he granted the Wyandot's request.

"Yes."

"Does Weptonomah swear it?"

"By the Great Spirit."

"Then his request is granted. Weptonomah will become a mighty chief of the Five Nations," said the Mohawk. "Ta-

rangala's braves shall go with them to the end of the woods. Here is his hand on it."

The two chiefs' hands met, and the compact was sealed.

Then Weptonomah returned to the island, and told our friends the joyful news. They grasped his hands; but words could not convey the feelings of their hearts toward him—their deliverer.

Isora wept joyful tears at the sweet thought of seeing her father again, and Morgan and Gottlieb were too glad that the great work of their lives was about ended.

They remained on the island till evening, when they joined the Mohawks, on the shore. They were welcomed by the chiefs and warriors of the greatest tribe of the Five Nations, and the following morning, under the protection of a number of Tarangala's braves, they took up the long march for New York.

The scalp of the renegade hung at Weptonomah's belt!

He had kept his word.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT LAST.

AN old man was caressing a beautiful young girl in old New York.

He was smiling upon her, and calling her "his own, his long-lost Isora."

And she was looking up into his wrinkled face, and murmuring, sweetly:

"Father, dear father!"

Yes, gentle reader, Isora is home at last, and her head rests upon the bosom of her parent!

The journey through the woods had been accomplished without accident.

Near the city, Weptonomah had taken her hand for the last time. He would not enter it to be richly rewarded for his noble conduct.

The parting between him and his white friends was very affectionate, and he turned away, to become a Mohawk.

"We will meet in the lodge of the Great Spirit," were his parting words. "There we will be ever joyful. There are no death-trails there, and no enemies. Good-by, pale-faces. Weptonomah will think of you when he presses the trail of death with his moccasins."

The next moment his face was turned from them, and they watched him until he and the Mohawks were lost among the trees.

They never saw him more. Among the Five Nations he became a distinguished chief, covering himself with glory.

At last he stepped upon the trail of death, and found repose—let us hope, in a better world than this.

He was buried on the banks of Lake Ontario, near the great cataract of Niagara.

May his bones never be disturbed!

One beautiful night, a few months after Isora had been restored to her father, Morgan Darrell encountered her in the pretty garden adjoining the old antique family residence.

For an hour they lived over, in conversation, the thrilling events of their lives among the savages, when Morgan suddenly said :

"Isora."

His voice had a strange sound, and the beautiful girl gazed into his eyes.

He ventured to take her little hand in his, and press it to his lips.

"Isora," he cried, "do you not know what I would say?"

Her gaze sought the flowers at her feet.

"Morgan—" she suddenly paused.

"I need not ask the question, then?"

"No, Morgan."

She smiled, and then blushed deeper than ever.

He folded her to his heart, and sealed the betrothal with a kiss.

His heart was overflowing with joy. His great life-work had not been for naught; and, for the little hand hidden in his, he would have undertaken it again.

A month later they were married, and entered upon a new and blissful life. Together they glided peacefully down the stream of time, until, when gray-haired, they anchored in the haven of eternal rest.

After our old friend Gottlieb reached New York, he became restless, and was not satisfied until a ship was bearing him back to Germany, and many relations on the banks of the Rhine. There, a year later, he took a maiden to his bosom and called her his "vrow."

Bright Star—ah! Bright Star, the beautiful Erie, and companion of Isora, was happy in the love of the chivalrous Leaping Panther, whose bride she became.

Ethepeate died a natural death, a few years after the escape of his prisoners, and, as he was childless, Eagle-feather stepped into his moccasins and worthily filled them.

And now, reader, we—

"But hold!" says a voice at our elbow. "What became of Black Thunder, the brave and eloquent Chippewa, who saved Weptonomah and his friends, as related in chapter seventh?"

Ah! we had entirely forgotten the noble fellow. He returned to his nation after the "fatal pursuit," and devoted his life to oratory. Pindaro would have banished him, but he could not prove him a traitor. The red orator became quite an old man, and quietly sunk to sleep in death immediately at the conclusion of an eloquent speech.

Now, gentle, unseen reader, our romance is ended, and we lay the pen aside, hoping, not vainly, we trust, that it has enabled you to pass some idle moments pleasantly and profitably.

It is not "good-by" that we say now, simply *au revoir*.

THE END.

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A pathetic story,

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The crow,
Out west.

DIME READINGS AND RECITATIONS, No. 24.

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The lightning-rod agent
The tragedy at four ace
flat,
Ruth and Naomi,
Carey of Corson,
Babies,
John Reed,
The brakeman at
church,
Passun Mooah's sur-
mount,
Arguing the question.
Jim Wolfe and the cats,

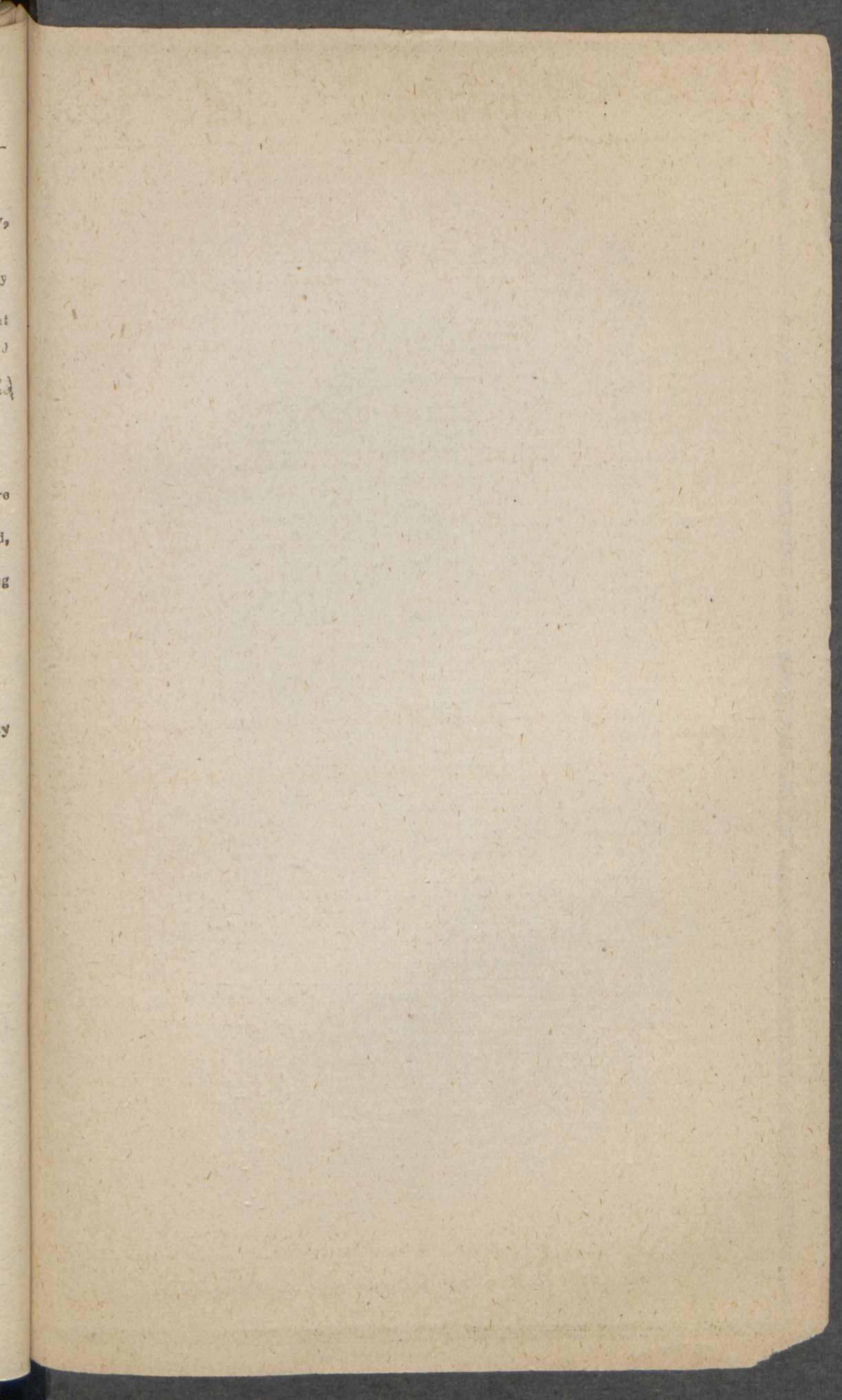
The dim old forest,
Rasher at home,
The Sergeant's story,
David and Goliah,
Dreaming at fourscore,
Rum,
Why should the spirit
of mortal be proud?
The coming mustache,
The engineer's story,
A candidate for presi-
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Roll call,
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family,

When the cews come
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The donation party,
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A Michigander in
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At Elberon,
The cry of womanhood,
The judgment day,
The burst bubble,
Curfew must not ring
to-night,
The swell,
The water mill,
Sam's letter,
Footsteps of the dead,
Charity,
An essay on check.

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